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**Primary mentors' conceptions of subject knowledge
in English**

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION (EdD)

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ABSTRACT

This research investigates concepts of subject knowledge in English held by teachers acting as student mentors in primary schools, in an Initial Teacher Education and Training (ITET) partnership. A case study approach draws on evidence from documentary sources, interviews with mentors and tape-recorded conversations between mentors and student teachers, following the observation of English lessons.

During the past 25 years teachers' professional identities have been re-structured through a series of Government interventions into the curriculum and teachers' working conditions, culminating in the introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. It has been argued that these reforms have established a 'culture of compliance' within the teaching profession.

Government intervention has taken place in ITET, which has been regulated through OfSTED inspection. Since 1992 schools and Higher Education Institutions have been required to establish training partnerships. A National Curriculum for ITT was introduced in 1997.

It is suggested that opportunities for student teachers to learn through reflective practice are constrained by policy directives affecting ITET and primary schools.

The management of student teachers' learning, and the assessment of their progress is the responsibility of a designated student mentor. Previous research indicates that primary mentors do not place a high priority on supporting the development of student teachers' subject knowledge.

Evidence from the case study suggests primary mentors implicitly distinguish between different forms of subject knowledge for teaching. They hold a developmental model of learning to teach which seeks to move

student teachers towards an awareness of the needs of learners. Mentors' conceptions of subject knowledge in English are circumscribed by the curriculum and pedagogical approaches recommended in the National Literacy Strategy. The subject specialism and personal interests of mentors are also a significant factor in these conceptions. Mentors who have entered the profession more recently appear to be more accepting of the content and approaches of the NLS.

Much of the literature on mentoring assumes an underpinning model of the reflective teacher. The mentoring practices examined in the case study were situated within the context of the school and delivery of the NLS requirements. It is suggested that it may be unrealistic to expect broader reflective discussion on curriculum issues within the current policy context and structures of school experience. A re-examination of the ways in which student teachers' experiences in schools are conceptualised and organised, in terms of professional learning, may thus be necessary.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to all the primary teachers who assume responsibility for supporting the professional development of student teachers, in recognition of the commitment they demonstrate towards the future of the teaching profession.

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Stipulation as to authorship.

No part of the materials contained within this dissertation has previously been submitted for a degree or other qualification at The Open University, or any other university or institution.

This dissertation is my own independent work and has not been part of any joint research investigation.

Gendered references within the text.

All participants referred to within the dissertation are referred to by appropriate pronouns i.e. 'she' or 'he'.

Where more generalised references are made, for example to primary mentors or teachers in general, the convention 's/he' or 'her or his' is used to avoid any implied gender bias or assumptions within the text.

List of abbreviations

CATE	Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education
DES	Department of Education and Science
DfEE	Department of Education and Employment
DfES	Department for Education and Skills
ERA	Education Reform Act
GTC	General Teaching Council
HEI	Higher Education Institution
INSET	In-Service Education of Teachers
ITE	Initial Teacher Education
ITET	Initial Teacher Education and Training
ITT	Initial Teacher Training
ITT NC	Initial Teacher Training National Curriculum
NLS	National Literacy Strategy
NNS	National Numeracy Strategy
MOTE	Modes of Teacher Education
NQT	Newly Qualified Teacher
OfSTED	Office for Standards in Education
PACE	Primary Assessment, Curriculum and Experience
PGCE	Post Graduate Certificate in Education
QCA	Qualifications and Curriculum Authority
QTS	Qualified Teacher Status
TTA	Teacher Training Agency

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

The Study

This study investigates concepts of subject knowledge in English held by teachers in primary schools. These teachers were acting as student mentors with undergraduate student teachers, on a three-year Initial Teacher Education and Training (ITET) programme offered by a single Higher Education Institution (HEI). The research investigation takes the form of a case study, which examines mentors' conceptions of subject knowledge in primary English and, through these, some implicitly held conceptions of professional development and professionalism in undergraduate student teachers.

Successive government circulars have emphasised the significance of the role of schools in ITET (DES, 1989b, DfEE, 1993, DfEE, 1998c, TTA, 2002,2003). HEI are required to work in "partnership" with schools, and to actively involve them in:

- planning and delivering initial teacher training
- selecting trainee teachers
- assessing trainee teachers for Qualified Teacher Status

(R 3.1, TTA, 2003: 17)

In the primary school context, the management of the student teacher's learning, and the assessment of her or his progress is primarily the responsibility of a designated student mentor, who is normally a classroom teacher within the school.

The term 'mentor' is used in a variety of contexts outside that of Initial Teacher Education and Training (ITET). In contexts such as business and industry new employees may be allocated a mentor who acts as a sponsor, patron and guide to career development (Turner & Bash, 1999:68). Peer mentoring or "buddy mentor" arrangements are also established in many occupational areas, as part of the induction of new employees at all levels of

experience. In the current context of primary ITET, the generally accepted definition of a mentor is that of an experienced teacher who has a designated responsibility for supporting the learning of one or more students who are learning to teach in school based settings. Additionally, under the requirements of Circulars 14/93 (DfE, 1993), and re-iterated in Circular 4/98 (DfEE, 1998c) and *Qualifying to Teach* (TTA 2002,2003), schools must be actively involved in the assessment of student teachers. Student mentors in the primary school context therefore have dual responsibilities: for supporting professional development and exercising professional judgement. The role of the mentor in the primary school is thus significant, in terms of her or his potential influence on student teachers' professional learning.

The investigation took place over the three-year period between 2000 and 2003. It followed the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy (DfEE, 1998b) and The National Numeracy Strategy (DfEE 1999c) in primary schools in England (NLS, NNS). The introduction of a National Curriculum for Initial Teacher Training (ITT NC) in 1998 (DfEE, 1998c) specified the subject knowledge and understanding primary student teachers were required to hold in order to meet Standards for the Award of Qualified Teacher Status (DfEE 1998c) (the *Standards*).

The study is based on three main evidence sources: written comments produced by mentors following observation of students' teaching of English lessons in primary school classrooms, tape recorded conversations held between mentors and student teachers following lesson observations, and taped, semi-structured interviews with mentors and student teachers. The written comments were recorded using a pro-forma designed by the HEI to provide evidence of student teachers' progress towards the Standards for the Award of Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) (DfEE 1998c, TTA 2002,2003).

The introduction of the National Literacy Strategy, the National Numeracy Strategy and the ITT National Curriculum jointly reflected a more extensive intervention into curriculum and pedagogical approaches in primary education than had been experienced previously. There was a strong

emphasis on primary teachers' subject knowledge in English and mathematics (and science in the ITT NC) and also clear directives as to ways in which literacy and numeracy should be taught in primary schools. As stated, the study seeks to investigate concepts of subject knowledge in English, held by mentors in primary schools, and how they are evidenced in their work with student teachers. The investigation is focused on a single subject area for the purpose of manageability. The subject area of English was chosen in the context of the policy directives identified earlier, and because of its central place in the primary school curriculum.

Research investigations carried out prior to the introduction of the NLS and NNS had suggested that primary teachers had not placed a high priority on subject knowledge in their discussions with students (Edwards and Collison 1996, Maynard 1996, Edwards and Ogden 1998). This research suggested that the beliefs and values underpinning teachers' work with students had been primarily concerned with child-centred approaches to teaching, in which the students' own knowledge of the subjects they were teaching had low priority (Maynard 1996: 53). There was thus a potential conflict between the priorities of teachers working as mentors of students in classrooms, and the emphasis placed on strong personal knowledge of English as a necessary requisite for effective teaching, manifest within the NLS and ITT NC. This study will therefore examine the effect of the development of the NLS on mentors' concepts of subject knowledge in primary English over the period of the investigation. In so doing, the study considers how far mentors have accommodated to the requirements of the NLS in their work with student teachers, and how far they have also retained beliefs about teaching and learning in primary schools which are child-centred rather than curriculum centred.

The research conducted by the Primary Assessment Curriculum and Experience (PACE) project team (Osborn et al., 2000, Pollard et al., 2000) indicated that primary teachers valued the affective aspects of their work even more strongly following the introduction of the National Curriculum (Osborn et al., 2000: 55). They attempted to maintain their central commitment to the needs of pupils while also adapting to change through

the strategies of “incorporation” and “creative mediation” (Pollard et al., 1994, Osborn et al., 2000:67-69). The study will consider how far these strategies could be applied to mentors in the current policy context.

The PACE research was located within the context of professional change. The 1988 Education Reform Act (ERA) (DfES, 1988) changed teachers’ classroom practice, and also how they perceived themselves and how they were perceived by others. The process of professional change as it has affected teachers has been described as a “**de**-professionalisation by some (Helsby, 1995), and as a “**re**-professionalisation” by others (Hargreaves, D, 1994, DfEE, 1998). In whichever form the process of professional change is conceived, the introduction of the NLS and ITT NC were an extension of the process begun by the ERA. This study thus encompasses issues relating to teachers’ professionalism.

The context of the study

The study has been conducted within the training partnership developed between a large number of primary schools (approximately three hundred and fifty) and a single HEI. The influence of the HEI on mentoring practices within the training partnership will also be considered. Since the size of the training partnership is considerable (it is one of the largest in the UK), it is felt that some generalisability from the results of the investigation will be possible.

During the period of the investigation I worked as a senior member of staff in the Primary Initial Teacher Education and Training Department, part of a large Faculty of Education in an HEI. My role within the Department was to lead and manage the training partnership between the HEI and approximately 350 schools within the primary sector, which are involved in training ITT students on various courses (hereafter referred to as the Partnership). This role involved organising and overseeing student placements in schools, including the assessment process; maintaining appropriate quality assurance mechanisms through the management of a team of HEI link tutors; training and supporting mentors in schools and developing a range of ways to strengthen and develop the relationship

between the College and the schools and to engage mentors in schools and HEI tutors in continuing professional discussions. As the facilitator of this extended and large-scale professional dialogue, I was potentially influential in shaping the perceptions of mentors about their role in supporting students' professional development.

In this respect, the case study must be seen as an example of "insider research", and this issue will be discussed further in Chapters Seven and Eight, which discuss the methodological approaches adopted within the investigation.

Two paradigms of teacher education and training.

Throughout the dissertation, two paradigms of teacher education and training are contrasted. These are identified as the *training* paradigm, sometimes signified by the use of the phrase Initial Teacher Training (ITT), and the *education* paradigm, sometimes signified by the phrase Initial Teacher Education (ITE). In their simplest forms, the training paradigm represents a view that "the skills of teaching are essentially practical ones" (Lawlor, 1995:108), and the education paradigm represents a view that theoretical understanding is a necessary accompaniment to practical experience. While it is unlikely that any route into teaching adopts an extreme version of either paradigm, these two views can be identified in the discourses of policy makers and educationalists.

In this respect, too, I have acted as an insider researcher. I retain a commitment to an ideal of teacher education, not as opposed to training, but as a means of making meaning from activities that could otherwise become skills focused without reflection on their wider significance. For this reason I have used the acronym ITET within the dissertation, drawing on the example of Simco and Wilson (2002).

The structure of the dissertation.

The dissertation is divided into three parts. The first part explores three inter-related themes that have emerged through an examination of the literature These are:

the professional development of novice teachers, and teacher professionalism;
concepts of subject knowledge for teaching;
concepts of subject knowledge in English.

In each case, an examination of research evidence, the work of educationalists and policy documents of successive governments reveals alternative, and sometimes oppositional, discourses. The following three chapters examine these contrasting views and the final chapter in this section of the dissertation draws these themes together in considering the role of the mentor in the primary school. At the end of each chapter I identify questions which have been raised by the literature which the study seeks to answer through the examination of evidence obtained from documentary sources, interviews and tape-recorded conversations between mentors and student teachers following lesson observations. Finally, at the end of the first part of the dissertation, I summarise my own views on these themes. These have been articulated through an examination of the research evidence, the work of educationalists and an examination of policy documents.

I begin in Chapter Two by discussing contrasting views of the purpose of ITET, which are encapsulated in the distinction between “education” and “training”. These embody different conceptions of teacher professionalism, implicitly identified in differing views of the role of practical experience in ITET and the knowledge required in order to be able to teach effectively. Chapter Three then considers the question of subject knowledge for teaching. The high priority given to subject-matter knowledge in policy documents relating to the primary curriculum and primary ITET is contrasted with other research evidence.

The case study has focused on the subject area of English and the introductory section of Chapter Four considers different models of English in education before discussing the distinction between “English” and “literacy”, and contrasting the predominantly linguistic view of literacy which is implicit within the NLS with alternative “meaning-led” views. The final sections examine research into primary teachers’ beliefs about literacy

teaching, and the impact of the introduction of the NLS on student teachers' practice and beliefs about the subject. As stated, Chapter Five draws together the issues of professionalism and subject knowledge in the work of the mentor in primary ITET. There are challenges and tensions for both mentor and student in the primary school context, and the primary mentor requires a complex combination of skills, qualities and professional knowledge in order to be able to support student teachers' professional learning within the 'educationalist' model of ITET.

The second part of the dissertation focuses on the research process. In Chapters Six and Seven I locate the methodological approach to the study as a whole within the qualitative research paradigm, and discuss approaches to case study as a research method in the qualitative tradition. I discuss the strengths and limitations of each of the main data gathering methods employed in the case study, and note other naturally occurring events during the period of the research investigation that have provided supplementary information.

In Chapter Eight I then offer a critical review of the research investigation, showing how my methodological assumptions were challenged through the process. I consider it important to provide an overview of my own changing approaches to the investigation before presenting the findings, since the forms in which the findings were collected and their presentation within the dissertation have been influenced over the period of the investigation by my own changing perspectives on the research process. Finally, I indicate aspects of the methodology that I would review if I were to repeat a similar investigation.

In the final part of the dissertation, I consider the findings and review these under the three main themes that were considered in the review of the literature. Chapter Nine examines evidence from documentary sources and interviews, to explore mentors' conceptions of subject knowledge for teaching, as demonstrated in relation to primary English. Chapter Ten considers influences on the case study mentors' conceptions of subject knowledge in English and how these are expressed in practice. Chapter

Eleven then considers mentors' views about the professional development of novice teachers, as expressed in the ways in which they comment on students' subject knowledge in English at different stages of training. In each chapter I show how my findings relate to the work of other researchers and draw some conclusions related to each main theme on the basis of my research.

Chapter Twelve summarises the findings and shows how research questions that were developed from the literature have been answered through the investigation. I discuss the conceptions of teacher professionalism held by mentors that can be implied from evidence drawn from the case study. Finally, I discuss the implications of these findings for a teacher education and training system which relies significantly on the role of the mentor as a agent of professional development and consider some implications for future practice for the HEI and for a re-consideration of some aspects of a partnership model of teacher training.

CHAPTER TWO

Visions of professionalism

Introduction

The larger questions underlying this research investigation are, what do novice teachers need to know and how do they need to learn, in order to develop as professionals, during the process of initial teacher education and training? These questions have been answered differently by educationalists and government policy makers during the last twenty-five years, and alternative concepts of teacher professionalism lie at the heart of the debate.

There is an extensive literature covering the fields of policy studies and teacher professionalism and this short discussion cannot do justice to the complexities of many of the issues. It seeks to identify the main arguments that have been put forward by policy makers, and educational writers and researchers, in respect of the place of practical experience in learning to teach and the kind of knowledge required to support this experience. Chapter Three provides a more detailed discussion of concepts of the knowledge bases required for teaching.

A profession can be defined as one with “distinguishing characteristics on which there is a high degree of consensus, including knowledge base, autonomy and responsibility” (Hoyle and John, 1995:16). In each of these three areas, the roles and responsibility of the teacher have been substantially re-conceptualised over the past twenty-five years.

During this period successive governments have re-structured teachers’ working lives and professional identities through a series of interventions into the curriculum, teachers’ working conditions, career progression, initial teacher education and training and, most recently, pedagogical approaches, through the introduction of the NLS and NNS. Although the premises upon which the various governments have operated have been differently expressed, depending on their political complexion, the overall effect of

these interventions has been a consistent reduction of individual teachers' autonomy, but an increase in levels of accountability (Osborn et al., 2000: 48).

The following sections of this chapter examine some contrasting views of professionalism held by policy makers and educationalists during the period 1983 to 1997 when a series of far-reaching changes to the education system, including ITET, were implemented. Two themes emerge from this period that have particular significance for this research investigation: the role of schools and the significance of subject knowledge in the process of learning to teach. The chapter then reviews developments in ITET and the primary curriculum since 1997 that have impacted directly on the research investigation and considers the effects of this period of educational change upon teachers' concepts of professionalism.

Contrasting views of teacher professionalism

Economic pressures in post-industrial societies, resulting from globalisation, have changed the character of education, and thus of teachers' roles. Governments in several western societies have seen education as the route to economic regeneration, and also as the means by which national culture and identity will be maintained in the face of multicultural migration (Hargreaves, A. 1994: 5). As a result, the attention of policy makers has turned to a re-construction of the curriculum in an attempt to meet these needs. In order to ensure that these policies will be implemented, teachers' roles and working conditions have also been regulated more strictly.

In the early 1970s teachers in England and Wales enjoyed a considerable degree of autonomy in terms of the curriculum and decision making (Grace 1987). Hoyle's (1974) well-known distinction between the "restricted" and the "extended" professional was developed within this context. This contrasted a model of teacher professionalism which drew solely on experience situated within the school, with one which related teaching to a wider social context informed by further education, reflection and investigation. This latter aspect of extended professionalism was reflected in

the work of Stenhouse (1975), which developed the idea of the teacher-as - researcher.

Dewey (1933) contrasted routine action, which is unquestioning and derived from tradition or institutional expectations, with reflective action that engages the practitioner in self-evaluation and development. In developing the concept of the “reflective practitioner”, Schon (1983) bridged the theory-practice divide by arguing that teachers’ professional knowledge is derived from practice through the processes of reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action. The different, but related, theories of Dewey(1933), Schon (1983) and Stenhouse (1975) provided a conceptual underpinning for many Initial Teacher Education (ITE) courses. Fish (1989: pp. 28-31) identifies the ranges of models of ITE existing by the end of the 1980s. In 1990 the Modes of Teacher Education Project (MOTE) survey found that 57% of ITE courses adhered to the notion of the reflective practitioner (Furlong et al., 2000).

The contrasting visions of teaching held on the one hand by those HEI whose ITE courses were based on the reflective practitioner model, and on the other by policy makers in Whitehall, focused particularly on the purpose and nature of school experience in ITET, and on the issue of the knowledge required for teaching.

The professional vision of ITE: 1983-1997: reflective practice.

The common thread of most ITET courses during this period was a vision of teacher professionalism in which reflection on practice and investigation of practice were embedded, and through which teachers’ professional knowledge would be developed. The experiences of student teachers in schools were an essential element in the development of this “reflective practitioner”.

Educational research in the late 1970s and 1980s had begun to focus on teachers’ professional or “craft” knowledge (Zeichner et al., 1987) as a distinctive body of knowledge, formulated in the context of the classroom. This knowledge was often implicit (Elbaz, 1983) but, it was argued, could

be made explicit both to the self and others through the process of reflection.

Where this conception of teacher knowledge was accepted, the role of school experience was to enable student teachers to learn through practice. Fish (1989, 23-26) argues that conceptions of ITE which assume that the “theory” learned in the HEI is carried into school and then applied in practice belies the complexity of professional knowledge, and creates a false separation between theory and practice.

Reflection, in this context, involves not only analysing and evaluating one’s own practice, but also being aware of the social and political frameworks within which teaching operates. It involves recognising the moral and ethical dimension of teaching, and empowering teachers to influence the future of education as well as engaging them in personal professional development (Pollard and Tann, 1987, Calderhead and Gates, 1993, Sultana, 1995). The vision of professionalism that is embodied in this view of teacher education is one of autonomy over educational choices. The teacher is conceived as an agent of social change.

Dialogue with others is essential if reflection is to move beyond description of one’s own practice towards confronting personal beliefs and ideological assumptions and considering ethical issues (Day, 1993: 86, Fish, 1995: 51, Pollard, 2002: 20). The role of the experienced professional in supporting the novice’s reflection is thus significant in this model and has implications for the role of the mentor.

The bannerhead of “reflective practice” is not without its dangers. Calderhead (1989:46) warned that the phrase “has become a slogan, disguising numerous practices” (Calderhead, 1989:46). Even where a shared definition is established, there are difficulties in identifying how the aims of reflective teaching operate in practice, and whether they improve teaching (Calderhead and Gates, 1993: 3). Nevertheless, the values associated with the concept of reflective practice withstood a series of major policy initiatives in ITET, teachers’ work and the curriculum throughout the 1990s.

For example, most courses extended the basic list of competences from Circulars 9/92 (DfEE, 1992) and 14/93(DfEE, 1993) to incorporate statements about reflection and thus to maintain a broader view of professional attitudes (Furlong, Barton et al., 2000). In this way, teacher education courses based in HEIs continued to promote a concept of professionalism in contrast to that expressed in government policy of the 1990s.

The concept of professional knowledge as being created through reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action presumes an important role for practical experience in schools as part of ITE. The 1980s saw the development of a number of collaborative ITE arrangements between HEI and schools (Wilkin, 1990, Fish, 1989, 1995). These included the IT/INSET project (Ashton et al., 1983), and initiatives such as the Oxford Internship Scheme in which HEI tutors and school staff were regarded as “co-professionals” (Benton, 1990, McIntyre, 1990). Ironically, the success of these projects, particularly the Oxford Scheme, may have influenced the policy makers, who were seeking to shift the focus of teacher training (ITT) away from the HEI.

Policy makers and professionalism in ITT 1983-1997

If the professional vision of ITE was of learning through practice, the contrasting view expressed within a series of policy documents from successive governments in the 1980s and 1990s was of learning by practice. These are summarised in Fig 2.1.

DATE	POLICY DECISION	CONTENT SUMMARY	EFFECT ON ITET
1983	<i>Quality in Teaching</i> (DES 1983)	Establishes Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education: (CATE). ITT courses must meet given criteria including tutors' 'recent and relevant' experience in schools.	Direct regulation of content of ITT with implication that accreditation could be withdrawn for non compliance with criteria
1984	Circular 3/84 (DES)	Sets out the criteria for accreditation more explicitly: the active involvement of teachers in course design, and the assessment of students' work in schools.	Practical experience in schools and of teachers is given higher status. The place of 'theory' in ITET is discredited.
1988/9	Licensed and Articled Teacher Schemes introduced	Both schemes involve employment based training with lessened role of HEI. The concept of the school based mentor is established within government documents.	These schemes are explicitly aimed at undermining the role of HEI. They enshrine the view that learning to teach is essentially a matter of acquiring a set of skills rather than one that involves the intellectual consideration of broader questions.
1988	Education Reform Act	National Curriculum introduced	Teachers' control over the curriculum is substantially reduced
1989	Circular 24/89 (DES 1989)	The role of teachers and importance of partnership with schools is further strengthened. Institutions are expected to have written policy statements outlining the roles of HEI and schools in ITET	The role of schools in training is enhanced but at the same time the National Curriculum has reduced teacher control over the curriculum
1992/3	Circulars 9/92 (Secondary ITT) and 14/93 (Primary ITT)	All prospective teachers to be trained to deliver the National Curriculum framework. The areas of competence expected of newly qualified teachers are specified, including a statement on subject knowledge and application.	These Circulars signal a far higher degree of direct intervention in the teacher training process than has hitherto been experienced by HEI. There are fears of a re-conceptualisation of teaching through a "technical-rationalist" approach.

DATE	POLICY DECISION	CONTENT SUMMARY	EFFECT ON ITET
1994	Teacher Training Agency (TTA) established	TTA takes over the role of CATE in approving accreditation of all ITT provision by whatever route. The TTA operates as a Government quango. An example of Whitty's "evaluative state" in operation (Whitty, 2001)	The TTA manages funding for teacher supply and educational research as well as ITT accreditation. It consequently exerts a powerful influence over course development and development of work with schools.
	OfSTED inspections of ITT	These inspections focus firstly on the teaching of reading and number, the management of courses and consistency of judgements of the quality of students' teaching at the end of training. The results of inspections are passed to the TTA.	Failure to meet the quality standards for ITT results in financial penalties through a reduction in allocation of student numbers or, in extreme cases, to a withdrawal of accreditation for teacher training. The market-led system of 'league tables' is extended to include ITT providers.
1997/8	Circulars 10/97 and 4/98	The competences of Circulars 9/92 and 14/93 are replaced by "Standards". The ITT National Curriculum (ITT NC) is introduced in Appendices to the Circulars.	The ITT NC represents the highest level of prescription in ITT so far. The content of the ITT NC is closely linked to that of the NLS and NNS also introduced into primary schools.
2002/2003	"Qualifying to Teach" (TTA 2002,2003). The OFSTED Framework for ITT inspection is revised.	Standards for Professional Values and Practice are added. The ITT NC is removed, but remains implicit.	Not yet known.....

Fig. 2.1. Significant Government documents impacting on ITET 1983-2002

Successive circulars promoted what has been described as a “technical-rationalist” approach to ITET (Jones and Moore, 1993, Adams and Tulasiewicz, 1995, Fish, 1995). The concept of teacher “education”, which was the language of the universities and colleges, was replaced by that of teacher “training”: the language of industry. Teaching was conceived as an essentially practical, skills-based enterprise, which it was possible to learn through a species of apprenticeship in the classroom (Lawlor 1995).

The introduction, in 1988/9, of various routes into teaching in which HEI did not play a central role, enshrined the view that learning to teach is essentially a matter of acquiring a set of skills rather than one that involves the intellectual consideration of broader questions. The term ‘mentor’ first began to be used in policy documents in the context of the employment based training approaches, and this context is important in indicating the role which mentors were expected to play in the training of new teachers, as deliverers of a skills-based training. In this view, the purposes of education are taken for granted, and thus the moral dimension of teaching is reduced and largely ignored.

The level of control over the curriculum previously held by teachers was substantially reduced by the implementation of the Education Reform Act of 1988, which established the National Curriculum in schools. The increased involvement of teachers in the selection, training and assessment of future members of the profession was thus accompanied by the curtailment of teachers’ relative autonomy in terms of curricular control.

The skills-based approach to ITT reached its peak within Circulars 9/92 and 14/93 (DfEE, 1992, 1993). The competency model developed within the documents proved to be unwieldy and time-consuming for both intending teachers and their trainers. In response to criticisms from schools and HEI, and in the face of an increasing teacher shortage, the competences were replaced by “Standards” in Circulars 10/97 and 4/98 (DfEE 1997, 1998). These circulars indicated that the ITET policy of New Labour would be to continue the patterns established by the Conservative governments.

It has been argued that the alteration from “competences” to “standards” was largely one of terminology (Hayes 1999a). The recommendation for wholistic assessment of the *Standards* (DfEE 1998:8), rather than the atomistic view of teaching implicit in the competence model, seemed to indicate a shift away from a purely skills-based conception of teaching on the part of policy makers towards a greater emphasis on the inter-dependent nature of professional skills. However, this did not in fact signal a lessening of prescription. Circulars 10/97 and 4/98 also introduced the National

Curriculum for ITT (ITT NC), which laid down the content of teacher training courses in English, mathematics, science and information and communications technologies. Subsequent OFSTED inspections of ITT would focus on English or mathematics, plus one other subject. An apparent lessening of prescription on the one hand was accompanied by significantly greater centralised intervention in the training curriculum on the other.

Following the ERA, all policy reforms to primary ITT emphasised the importance of teachers' subject knowledge. Other forms of teachers' professional knowledge were characterised as 'skills' with a resultant de-valuing of a range of knowledge bases. Implicit in the reforms was a conception of subject teaching as transmission of facts, supported by the skills base of "how to...". Chapter Three will consider the issues of subject knowledge for teaching in more detail, including questions of subject knowledge for primary teaching.

The new face of teacher professionalism

By the end of the 1990s a significant culture change had taken place both within the teaching profession and in ITET, as a result of the ERA and the various ITT Circulars. Teachers' working conditions and career progression had now been re-structured as part of a deliberate policy on the part of central government to re-shape teaching into a form of "new professionalism" (DfEE, 1998). This new professionalism included the heightened role of the school and the school mentor in supporting the learning of student teachers.

Some influential voices, such as that of David Hargreaves, welcomed the increased role of schools in ITT as an indication that the teaching profession had gained greater autonomy over its own development. Hargreaves (1994) suggested that the 'new professionalism' had potential benefits in terms of increased collegiality and collaboration between teachers, and saw these structures as empowering. However his namesake, Andy Hargreaves, argued that collegiality can be "contrived" rather than "spontaneous", and in the former case of enforced collaboration, the results can sometimes be far from empowering (Hargreaves, A., 1994: 208). It remains difficult to

support the claim that increased involvement in ITET offered professional autonomy, when the development of the role of schools is accompanied by increasingly restricted ITT curricula, and an inspection regime supported by sanctions.

Teachers: meeting the challenge of change provides a definition of this new professionalism (DfEE, 1998:14). This includes teachers taking responsibility for improving their skills and subject knowledge, accepting accountability and basing decisions on the evidence of “what works” in other schools and other countries. Financial rewards will follow recognised good performance “informed by rigorous annual appraisal” (DfEE, 1998:33). This economically driven, payment-by-results model drawn from industry is familiar as part of an overall managerialist approach, but the emphasis on professional knowledge as being “what works” also implies a strongly instrumental view of the role of research and professional enquiry.

It is not surprising that, given the rapid pace of change over the past decade, some teachers may have retreated into compliance with a more technicist model:

Where confidence is low, however, they (teachers) are likely to take a more passive role and to be amenable to manipulation and ‘being told what to do’ (Helsby, 1995: 325).

This has been supported through in-service practices which have concentrated on curriculum implementation, without the time or opportunity for discussion about ‘why’ as opposed to ‘how’ (Day, 1993, 1999).

The work of the PACE project has shown that, over time, teachers accommodate to those changes in their professional lives which appear to accord with their own values and beliefs, but resist others (Osborn et al., 2000). The summative literature on the project defines this tendency as “creative mediation” (Osborn et al., 2000). Similarly, Woods and Jeffrey (1997) discuss the possibility of a new professional discourse emerging from teachers’ abilities to adapt creatively to new guidelines and to retain a

commitment to the affective domain in their teaching. Troman's (1996) case study of a primary school during a period of managerial change again indicates this capacity for adaptation:

Rather, the teachers are composite professionals in their responses to the new work, roles and identities that are opening up. They both comply with some of the educational reforms, which have restructured their work, yet resist others (Troman, 1996 p. 185)

Professionalism is a socially constructed concept, and is thus constantly changing. It is also constructed differently, simultaneously, within different contexts, as the work of Helsby (1995) indicates. In interviews with secondary teachers of varying levels of seniority, two categories of "professionalism" emerged: "being a professional" and "behaving professionally" (Helsby, 1995: 320).

"Being a professional" meant, essentially, being trusted by society to act autonomously and appropriately – something Helsby's respondents felt was not the case, following the implementation of the ERA (Helsby, 1995: 321). "Behaving professionally", however, was seen as something separate from issues of government policy or curriculum control. It related to commitment to the role of the teacher, respect for other colleagues and to parents, and to the willingness to continue to improve practice (Helsby, 1995: 323-4).

At the macro level, the new professionals may operate within a more managerialist context as part of re-professionalisation (Barton et al., 1994), but at the micro level of the school the values of "caring" (Woods and Jeffrey, 1997) and of responsibility towards one's pupils and one's colleagues remain strong (Helsby, 1995, Osborn et al., 2000).

Teachers' concepts of professionalism, and their responses to increased central control of the curriculum and working practice are thus complex and varied. Beliefs about professionalism held by student teachers' class teachers and mentors could be influential in determining the concepts of

professionalism that are developed through the school based elements of ITET.

The reflective practitioner re-defined...

The increasing amount of centralised intervention into curriculum, and latterly, pedagogical approaches, has inevitably limited the scope within which reflective practice can effectively operate, and the concept has, like teacher professionalism, also been re-defined.

We want to encourage teachers, as reflective practitioners, to think about what they do well, to reflect on what they could share with colleagues, as well as identifying their own learning needs. (DfEE, 2001: 12.)

This statement embodies a more limited view of the reflective teacher, than that which embodies reflection on ideological and ethical concerns. The emphasis is on description and self-evaluation situated primarily within the school and classroom context. The latest versions of the Standards (TTA, 2002,2003) also embody this version of reflection as an element of ‘Professional Values and Practice’. In order to obtain QTS, student teachers must demonstrate that:

They are able to improve their own teaching by evaluating it, learning from the effective practice of others and from evidence. They are motivated and able to take increasing responsibility for their own professional development. (TTA, 2002: para 1.7.)

The concept of “evidence based practice” has become part of the discourse of policy documents, and is sometimes reduced to a simplistic formula:

To a large extent, an unproblematised conception of knowledge has been accepted by researchers, and imposed by policy makers keen to identify ‘what works’ in education (Poulson, 2001: 51).

Although more sophisticated concepts of teaching as a “research based profession” (Hargreaves, 1996) are provided by both educationalists (Pollard, 2002) and policy developers (Cordingley, 1998) it is not clear how

these will influence primary teachers' practice, in contrast to the influences of initiatives such as the NLS and NNS.

Over the past two years there have also been some signs of a 'loosening-up' of policy in respect of ITET. This is evidenced in revisions to the Standards (TTA, 2002,2003), which now begin with statements of expectation for Professional Values and Practice (TTA, 2003:7). The ITT NC is no longer a statutory requirement for ITET providers, and revisions to the Office for Standards in Education Framework for Inspection of ITT (OfSTED, 2002), now focus on quality assurance through the partnership model of training, rather than on curriculum delivery.

The establishment of Regional Steering Committees by the TTA in 2001 marks a shift of policy in terms of some devolution from the centre. HEI, Local Education Authority (LEA) and school representatives allocate funding to development projects to improve recruitment and training in their regions in relation to local, as well as national, priorities. The developing role of the General Teaching Council (GTC) also signals the possibility of a re-emergence of professional identity for teaching. These developments appear encouraging, after almost two decades of centralised government intervention. However, it also needs to be recognised that the teachers, and many HEI lecturers in teacher education who are now engaging with these more open institutions have themselves been 're-designed' over this period (Wright and Bottery, 1997, Whitty,1999).

Conclusion

There are conflicting views of teacher professionalism, which have to be accommodated in practice in the daily lives of teachers. This accommodation will inevitably affect the context in which mentors work with student teachers and thus there may, over time be a shift towards the officially defined version of professionalism, supported by the economic sanctions of career progression. The PACE research suggests that while many teachers felt under pressure as a result of the tension between the externally imposed demands of teaching and their desire to serve what they perceived to be the real needs of their pupils, newer teachers were "more

likely to find satisfaction within a more constrained and instrumental role, without losing their commitment to the affective side of teaching”(McNess et al., 2003).

Overall the recent literature on teacher professionalism is not encouraging for those wishing to regard teaching as a moral and intellectual process (Sultana, 1994), but there is some evidence of dissonance between the values of many teachers and the instrumental perception of teaching contained in many Government documents (Woods and Jeffrey, 1997, Osborn et al., 2000).

It is within this context of professional restructuring and re-conceptualisation that ITET currently operates. Even where their own values conflict with the prevailing culture, how far can mentors be expected to challenge this culture in their work with student teachers? If the PACE findings (Osborn et al., 2000) can be extended to apply to teachers' responses to current initiatives, which values will they transmit to student teachers and which will be unquestioned as a result of their “creative mediation”?

This discussion of the literature raises the following question in relation to the research investigation :

if teachers have to accommodate these conflicting views of teacher professionalism in their daily lives, which will be pre-eminent in their work with student teachers? Will mentors retain an affective, ‘child-centred’ concept of teacher professionalism, which they may implicitly transmit to student teachers or will they take a more instrumental, and less reflective, view of the received curriculum in English?

Chapter Ten examines mentors' conceptions of subject knowledge in English and how these are expressed in practice and Chapter Twelve then discusses conceptions of teacher professionalism held by mentors that can be implied from the research evidence.

CHAPTER THREE

Subject knowledge for teaching

Introduction

As the previous chapter indicates, the nature of teachers' professional knowledge is an important aspect of teacher professionalism. Although the nature of professional knowledge is contested in the views of educationalists and policy makers, subject knowledge is recognised by both as a significant component.

However, the relationship between the teacher's personal knowledge and their ability to support the learning of others is not straightforward. What is the precise nature of the subject knowledge that teachers need to possess? If teachers "know" aspects of a subject at their own level will they automatically be able to enable children to develop knowledge and understanding in the subject field? What counts as 'knowing' a subject for the purposes of teaching, as opposed to other purposes? Are these forms of knowing different? These questions have been the focus of educational research and educational policy during the 1980s and 1990s.

The nature of subjects

Firstly, the nature of "subjects" themselves needs to be considered. The work of Schwab (1978) has been influential in developing the idea that there are *substantive* or *syntactic approaches* to the structures of disciplines. Substantive approaches operate in terms of the organisation of content: "the conceptual devices which are used for defining, bounding and analysing the subject matters they investigate" (Schwab, 1978:246). Syntactic approaches are concerned with the epistemological structures of the subject: the ways in which knowledge in a subject is constructed. As Poulson (2001) points out, however, Schwab's approach to the disciplines was not intended to be applied directly to subjects in the school curriculum, nor did he consider that all disciplines have clear, unequivocal structures (Schwab, 1978:251).

The substantive view of disciplines and their related subjects suggests that differences of subject structure can arise from different conceptions of the subject. The identification of subject knowledge for English teaching, for example, would therefore be dependent upon a particular concept of the subject. This point will be considered more fully in Chapter Four in relation to English. However, Schwab's approach to the structures of the disciplines has been highly influential in other work on knowledge bases for teaching.

Knowledge bases required for teaching

Shulman's well known address in 1985 gave impetus to a series of investigations into the nature of subject knowledge for teaching. Shulman argued that the division which had arisen between knowledge and pedagogy was a false one, and that by emphasising the latter and ignoring the former, researchers and thus teacher educators, had generated a "missing paradigm...a blind spot with respect to content that now characterises most research on teaching" (Shulman, 1995: 127). Although Shulman's model has been subject to considerable criticism, it has been influential within the fields of educational research and education policy.

Shulman (1995) proposed a model of the knowledge required in teaching which implied transformation of 'academic' knowledge: *subject matter content knowledge* (Shulman, 1995:129) into knowledge for teaching or *pedagogical content knowledge* (Shulman, 1995:130). Content knowledge included not just the facts or concepts associated with a subject area, but also an understanding of the substantive and syntactic structures of the subject (Schwab, 1978). Pedagogical content knowledge concerned itself with ways of representing the subject, by analogy or example, to make it accessible to learners. It also included an understanding of the preconceptions and misconceptions learners might hold about aspects of the subject. Shulman also proposed a third knowledge category necessary for teachers – that of *curricular knowledge*, embodying relevant curriculum materials, resources and schemes or programmes appropriate for different subjects and different levels.

Since Shulman's address, there have been a large number of research studies examining knowledge bases for teaching. Initially, these studies concentrated on the area of pedagogic content knowledge. Researchers proceeded from the standpoint that the development of pedagogical content knowledge in student teachers was a necessary part of teacher education (for example, Grossman, 1989, Shulman, 1990) and attempted to prove that concentrating on pedagogical content knowledge in training improved teachers' effectiveness in the classroom (for example Meloth et al., 1989, Peterson et al., 1989). For this purpose, researchers attempted to identify constituent elements or schema of pedagogic content knowledge (Tamir, 1988, Marks, 1990), but it proved extremely difficult to separate content knowledge from pedagogical content knowledge convincingly (Marks, 1990, McEwan and Bull 1991, Bennett and Turner-Bissett, 1993).

Following the publication of his paper, critics of Shulman also argued that there was insufficient consideration of the affective domains of teacher knowledge. Ernest (1989) maintained that Shulman had placed insufficient emphasis on the attitudes of teachers towards a subject, and argued that knowledge, beliefs and attitudes all affected practice. The importance of teachers' beliefs about a subject, the effect of their values on the selection of subject matter for teaching and the nature of training which the teacher has previously undergone have all been identified as significant factors affecting subject knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge (Smith and Neale, 1989, Brickhouse, 1990, Grossman, 1989, Gudmundsdottir, 1990, Calderhead, 1992, Meredith, 1995, Dart and Drake, 1996, Aubrey, 1997, Arthur, Davison and Moss, 1997, Campbell and Kane, 1999). Shulman's categories therefore have to be considered with care.

Shulman also suggested that each category or domain of knowledge could take three forms: propositional knowledge, case knowledge and strategic knowledge. Teachers' strategic knowledge is employed, according to Shulman, when teachers recognise the need to move beyond propositional or rule knowledge in dealing with specific cases:

We generally attribute wisdom to those who can transcend the limitations of particular principles or

specific experiences when confronted by situations in which each of the alternate choices appears equally 'principled' (Shulman, 1995:132)

This recognition of the complexity of teachers' decision making as a form of knowledge has resonances of Schon's "knowing in action" (Schon, 1983) and of the "craft knowledge" of Brown and McIntyre (Brown and McIntyre, 1993). However in a footnote Shulman suggests that strategic knowledge may perhaps be a process of analysis rather than a form of knowledge in the same epistemological sense as propositional and case knowledge. Once the analysis of the new situation is completed the new knowledge will be "stored" either as a new proposition or as a new case (Shulman, 1995:133). This model of accretion, storage and transmission of knowledge does not adequately represent concepts of teacher knowledge which are more fluid and situated within the changing context of the school.

Attempts to identify and codify the constituent aspects of knowledge for teaching imply a fixed view of knowledge, whether it be content knowledge or pedagogical content knowledge. Banks, Leach and Moon, (1996: 6) describe this as an "an essentially objectivist epistemology" which characterises professional knowledge as "a static body of content, lodged in the mind of the teacher". Banks et al., (1996) propose a fusion of Shulman's subject knowledge and pedagogical knowledge with Gardner's theory of "multiple intelligences" (Gardner, 1993) and the work of Verret (1975) and Chevallard (1991) on didactic transposition in order to argue for a more dynamic relationship between forms of knowledge.

For example, a teacher's subject knowledge is enhanced by their own pedagogy in practice and by the resources which form part of their school knowledge. It is the active intersection of subject knowledge, school knowledge and pedagogical knowledge that brings teacher professional knowledge into being.

Lying at the heart of this dynamic process are the personal constructs of the teacher, a complex amalgam of past knowledge, experience, a personal view of what

constitutes ‘good’ teaching and *belief in the purposes of the subject* (Banks et al., 1996: 8. Italics mine).

In the discussion of English as a subject in the following chapter, it will be suggested that teachers who can articulate their beliefs about literacy are more likely to be effective literacy teachers (Medwell et al., 1998). However, beliefs about a subject can also act as a barrier to professional development and effective communication between student teacher and mentor.

In Meredith’s (1995) study of Terry, a post-graduate student training to teach mathematics in secondary schools Terry’s beliefs about the hierarchical nature of mathematics shape his pedagogical strategies. As a result he fails to offer his pupils the opportunity to develop their own understanding. Meredith shows that Terry has developed a concept of pedagogical content knowledge that has validity only if subject knowledge is conceived as static and incontestable. She argues that unless the subject perspectives of student teachers are exposed and examined, the development of pedagogical content knowledge will be inherently conservative (Meredith, 1995: 186).

Although Shulman’s original concepts of knowledge bases for teaching have been contested, his work established a research tradition into teacher-knowledge that has remained influential. More recently, researchers have either acknowledged the importance of pedagogical content knowledge in effective teaching, and subsumed this into a broader category of “subject matter knowledge” (Aubrey, 1997) or, conversely, identified content or subject-matter knowledge as a sub-set of pedagogical content knowledge (Turner-Bissett, 1999).

Subject knowledge in the primary school.

Shulman’s original arguments were based on work with subject specialists in secondary schools. As Poulson (2001:42) points out,

It was assumed that in order to develop pedagogical content knowledge, teachers already had a strong

understanding of the content and accepted modes of enquiry within a discipline.

There are questions, therefore, as to how far Shulman's concepts can be applied where teachers are responsible for teaching a number of curriculum subject areas.

Research conducted in the late 1980s and 1990s found significant weaknesses in primary teachers' subject knowledge (Wragg et al., 1989), and in the knowledge of primary student teachers at the end of training (Bennett and Carre, 1993). OfSTED inspection evidence also pointed to gaps in primary teachers' knowledge in mathematics and science in particular (OfSTED, 1994). The assumptions generated by these findings have been that deficiencies in the teacher's subject knowledge will affect their ability to teach effectively. These findings provided further impetus to aspects of education policy in the 1990s, which are discussed later in this chapter.

More recent studies have questioned the assumption that primary teachers necessarily need to have strong subject matter knowledge in order to teach effectively (Askew et al., 1997, Medwell et al., 1998). The teachers in these studies either did not always appear to have strong subject knowledge at their own level, or were unable to make it explicit out of context (Poulson, 2001: 44-45). In terms of their ability to make knowledge accessible to their pupils, however, they proved to be effective teachers of mathematics and literacy, if judged on the basis of pupil results on standardised tests.

Studies of mentoring and subject knowledge in primary schools undertaken before the introduction of the NLS indicate that primary mentors did not engage in discussions about subjects themselves. They focused upon the practicalities of planning and teaching specific aspects of subjects, without considering how these practicalities related to concepts within or about these subject areas, even in terms of why they are important for pupils (Maynard, 1996, Edwards and Collison 1996, Edwards and Ogden, 1998). Again, there was no suggestion that the mentors were unable to teach these subject areas effectively, but, as Poulson (2001: 46) states:

rather that they did not think about their teaching in these terms, and did not regard abstract subject knowledge as particularly important for themselves or for student teachers.

Primary teachers' subject knowledge, it is argued, is situated (Edwards and Ogden, 1998) and functional (Poulson, 2001). Banks et al., (1996) draw on the work of Tochon and Munby (1993) concerning novice and expert teachers in their model. Tochon and Munby (1993) show that more experienced secondary teachers are able to adjust their management of teaching time according to context, using a "wave function" (Tochon and Munby 1993: 216) between *didactics*, communicating the subject matter, and *pedagogy*, responding to pupils' needs in relation to their understanding of the subject matter. This model would appear to apply to much of primary teachers' work with pupils, particularly in relation to the often expressed purpose of primary education of helping children make meaning in their educational experiences.

Subject knowledge for teaching in the primary school, therefore, is a more complex matter than Shulman's model appears to imply. The view that a secure knowledge of the subject in both substantive and syntactic terms is necessary before pedagogical content knowledge can be developed, can be challenged in the light of recent research evidence. An alternative argument would place teachers' knowledge of *how* children learn before the *what*.

Other concepts of subject knowledge: Policy and Practice in the United Kingdom.

A re-birth of interest in subject knowledge during the 1980s was not confined to the academic establishment. At the same time, policy makers in both the USA and the UK turned their attention to the question of teachers' knowledge.

In this country, the Conservative governments between 1979 and 1997 initiated a series of far-reaching changes in the relationship between schools and central government leading firstly to the implementation of the ERA in

1988. Ball (1990: 133-172) shows that the DES held a strong and unquestioning view of the curriculum as subject-led in the period leading up to the ERA and the development of the National Curriculum. The ERA extended a subject-based view of education to the primary sector, which inevitably resulted in a subject-knowledge based view of teacher knowledge in primary schools and of primary ITET.

The ideological basis for the subject-led curriculum lay in the belief that the study of “education” as opposed to “subjects” in ITET had led to poor teaching (Lawlor, 1995: pp.107-108). Thus a return to a focus on the teaching of subjects, with a teacher-led pedagogy as opposed to an enquiry based curriculum would result in better discipline in schools and higher standards. Indeed, as Ball (1990) has shown, the two issues were frequently conflated in the minds of both politicians and the public of the time.

In the first post-ERA Circular concerned with ITET, Circular 24/89, ‘subject application’ became an obligatory element of ‘subject studies’ in teacher education (DES, 1989b). These categories appear to correspond approximately to Shulman’s pedagogical content knowledge and content knowledge respectively. Little detail concerning the nature of subject application is provided in the Circular, which was superseded in a very short time by Circulars 9/92 and 14/93 (DfEE, 1992,1993).

Evidence from early OfSTED inspections, and from research investigations conducted in the first years of the National Curriculum (Wragg et al., 1989, Bennett and Carre, 1993), fuelled policy makers’ beliefs that effective teaching required strong subject knowledge. Further strength was given to the subject-led primary curriculum, and to the need for strengthening primary teachers’ subject knowledge, by the publication of *Curriculum Organisation in Primary Schools* (Alexander et al., 1992).

The ITT Circular, 14/93 that followed (DfEE 1993:3), put these principles into place by reiterating support for the need for primary teachers to be:

confident in the subject knowledge needed for primary
teaching; able to use and choose among a range of

teaching methods; and competent in testing and assessing pupil progress. The benefits of timetabled subject teaching in Key Stage 2 are increasingly recognised.

In Circulars 9/92 and 14/93 (DfEE, 1992,1993), the emphases were firstly on the development of partnerships with schools, and secondly on the introduction of the competences expected of newly qualified teachers, but a definition of ‘subject competence’ was also attempted. This appeared in the “Note of Guidance” produced by the Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education, (CATE, 1993) and defines three levels of subject competence.

Level One: Basic familiarity. The NQT is dependent on tutor or colleagues for ideas about what to teach.

Level Two: enhanced subject competence. There is a stronger sense of the concepts and methodology of the subject. Independent judgements can be made about how it should be taught in particular circumstances. Still constricted by frameworks and approaches devised by others.

Level Three: the achievement of insight into the structures, concepts, content and principles of a subject, together with a secure understanding of how to teach it, the ability to exercise autonomy over approaches and resources, and the infectious enthusiasm which is associated with thorough subject mastery.

Fig. 3.1 Levels of subject competence, CATE Note of Guidance, 1993

The level three definition combined knowledge on a disciplinary level with pedagogical knowledge, curriculum knowledge and a recognition of the affective aspects of subject knowledge. There are unmistakable echoes here of the principles of subject knowledge outlined by Shulman (1995) and more particularly by Schwab (1978), but in practice, this definition was never developed. It was not wholly consistent with the strong emphasis on competence based assessment in Circular 14/93 and no indication of how these definitions would be translated into competences took place at the level of national policy for ITET.

The centrality of teachers’ subject knowledge has continued to influence subsequent government policy under New Labour. Chapter Two reviewed

the sequence of policy changes in respect of ITET in Fig 2.1 on pages 14 and 15. In terms of centralised control over the subject-matter knowledge required for primary teaching, the process has culminated in the development of the NLS and ITT NC. This has, until recently (2002), been policed by a system of OfSTED inspection of HEI ITET provision focusing specifically on inspection of students' teaching of English and mathematics and explicitly intended to ensure compliance with government policy. In the words of Gillian Shepherd (1996, DfEE)

We have set up the Teacher Training Agency to push forward our reforms. For the first time we have a body with responsibilities across the full range of teacher training. OfSTED can report on the quality of courses and TTA can close the bad ones.

In addition, the increased role of schools in ITET reinforces the pressures on students to conceptualise subject knowledge in English in terms of the content knowledge needed to deliver the objectives in the NLS *Framework*. Class teachers and mentors have been experiencing a barrage of training materials and courses focusing on the national strategies and naturally transmit their perceptions of the knowledge required to the students in their schools. The concepts of subject knowledge for English promoted by the NLS and the ITT NC for English will be discussed in the following chapter.

In 1993 student teachers were conceived as progressing along a continuum in respect of subject knowledge, beginning with the ability to plan individual lessons with support and ultimately achieving insight into the principles of a subject and autonomy in respect of its delivery. (CATE, 1993 para 2.5). As the previous sections of this chapter suggest, this view of how teacher knowledge develops can be challenged. However, although it was recognised that students would not achieve CATE level three subject competence in all subjects, and perhaps only in one, there was still a complex definition of what constituted subject knowledge, including cognitive, affective and pedagogical dimensions. In the five years between the publications of Circulars 14/93 and 4/98 this level of complexity was lost.

In the ITT NC there was little sense of a continuum of development in terms of subject knowledge in English. Student teachers were not required to progress towards autonomy over approaches to the teaching of English, rather, trainers were presented with specific requirements about the approaches trainees must be taught to use. There was no requirement for student teachers to acquire insight into the structures and principles of the subject. Instead, trainers were required to ensure trainees possessed pre-defined concepts and content knowledge, and were able to deliver this knowledge, within a given form, to meet a set of pre-determined objectives.

Although neither the NLS and NNS, nor the frameworks developed by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) are statutory, their impact on teachers' thinking and practice appears to have been significant. In 1999 a small-scale investigation, involving interviews with head teachers and class teachers, revealed the impact of national initiatives on some teachers' thinking:

Hopefully, if you're not confident certainly the numeracy framework will be very helpful if you don't feel confident in your subject knowledge – it's very clear...like spoonfeeding about what you're going to do in your next session. It all seems to be there, it almost takes the needs away (Wright 1999:8).

Wright argued that many teachers would take the same attitude towards English as a result of the development of the NLS *Framework* (DfEE, 1998b). If Wright's small-scale findings reflected a broader picture, mentors' concepts of subject knowledge as applied to students' professional development would be similarly circumscribed, and trainees' own perceptions could be limited to the content of the ITT NC.

Circular 4/98 (DfEE 1998c) has been superseded by *Qualifying to Teach* (TTA 2002, updated and re-issued 2003). These revised *Standards* have abandoned the detailed outline of subject content provided in the ITT NC. Instead, the section on *Knowledge and Understanding* specifies,

They know and understand the curriculum for each of the National Curriculum core subjects, and the frameworks, methods and expectations set out in the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. (TTA, 2002: 7)

By this means the non-statutory National Strategies have become embedded in the statutory requirements for ITT, and given equal weight with the (statutory) National Curriculum. In these circumstances, it is likely that most HEI will continue to ensure that the content of the ITT NC is covered within their courses, without the need for further specification. The revised Standards for the Award of Qualified Teacher Status (TTA, 2002, 2003) no longer require primary trainee teachers to study a specialist subject. This change in policy arises primarily from the need to cater for the diversity of routes into primary teaching now available, several of which are not consistent with the development of a subject specialism for primary teaching. However, it may also indicate a view that the essential subject knowledge needed to deliver the primary curriculum is now defined, within the National Strategies and the QCA schemes of work to the extent that is required for primary teachers, within what has been described as a “curriculum deliverer” model (Twiselton, 2000).

Conclusion

The culture change in respect of primary English teaching and of assumptions about underpinning subject knowledge has been rapid and overwhelming. For many teachers, it may have become difficult to remember previous methods and approaches, and there are now at least four cohorts of new teachers who will have not experienced any other approach to English than that of the NLS. As Wright and Bottery (1997) point out, there may be those (mentors and students) who

have not had the opportunity to consider that the way schools and teaching are presently organised is an accident of history and that it does not have to remain that way (Wright and Bottery, 1997:245).

This discussion argues that subject knowledge for teaching is a complex and dynamic construct. It is subject to change in the light of experience, but is

concerned essentially with the transformation of the teacher's content knowledge into a form which is accessible and meaningful to the learner. Content knowledge is not a fixed body of knowledge, but is itself shaped by the beliefs, values and previous experiences of the teacher. The process of mentoring student teachers is one means by which the transformative process might be supported and critically examined.

The research investigation is concerned primarily with primary mentors' conceptions of subject knowledge in English. This discussion of the literature and policy documents concerning subject knowledge for teaching and its significance in the process of professional development for student teachers therefore raises questions which underpin the research investigation.

In general, both policy makers and educationalists have recognised some distinctions between different forms of subject knowledge, although their emphases on each have differed. Previous research into primary mentors' views about subject *content* knowledge has suggested that this has not been an area of prime concern in their work with student teachers.

The central question the research investigation seeks to examine thus has two main areas:

- what importance do mentors ascribe to subject knowledge in their work with primary student teachers?
- do their conceptions imply an awareness of different forms of subject knowledge and if so, how do mentors see relationships between these different forms?

Teachers' beliefs about a subject have also been argued as having a considerable influence on the conception of subject knowledge they hold for that particular subject. The research investigation thus also considers how far the mentor's subject specialism, if any, affects their beliefs and practice.

Chapter Nine explores the case study mentors' conceptions of subject knowledge for teaching, as demonstrated by the research evidence in relation to primary English.

It has been stated that the impact of Government policy and initiatives upon primary mentors' views of subject knowledge, particularly in English, is likely to have been considerable.

- how far have Government policy and initiatives influenced the views of the mentors in the case study?

Chapter Ten considers the evidence of influences on the case study mentors' conceptions of subject knowledge in English and how these are expressed in practice.

The work of Tochon and Munby (1993) suggests that expert teachers are able to respond to pupils' needs through their ability to shift between *didactics* and *pedagogy*. Although student teachers are regarded as novices, rather than experts in this context, there is nevertheless a progression in their own expertise through the period of their ITET programme. This raises the subsidiary question:

- do primary mentors consider that subject knowledge forms and relationships change in relation to experience?

Chapter Eleven considers mentors' views about the professional development of novice teachers, as expressed in the ways in which they comment on students' subject knowledge in English at different stages of training.

CHAPTER FOUR

Subject Knowledge in English

The investigation concentrated on the subject area of English both because of its central place in the primary school curriculum, and because the introduction of the NLS and the ITT NC have provided an opportunity to examine teachers' thinking about subject knowledge in the context of a single, large-scale initiative.

What is "English?"

There has been little common agreement about what the subject of English encompasses throughout the twentieth century (Ball, 1985), and we have entered the twenty first century with the debate continuing (Hodges, Moss and Shreeve, 2000). Teachers' beliefs about the nature of a subject are acknowledged to be an integral aspect of subject knowledge (Ernest, 1989, Grossman, Wilson and Shulman, 1989, Meredith, 1995), thus it is important to consider the varying, sometimes conflicting, versions of English as a subject currently in existence.

'English' as a curriculum subject appears inextricably entwined with notions of cultural and national identity, and of power:

Since the beginnings of mass public education in England and Wales, the teaching of English has been a focus of keen political interest and political control (Ball et al., 1990: 47).

The embedded values of various official stances on English during the twentieth century veered between emphases on literary values, language competence for personal growth and grammatical correctness, exemplified in the Newbolt Report (Departmental Committee of the Board of Education, 1921), the Bullock Report (DES, 1975) and the Kingman Report (DES, 1988). Each of these views represented a distinct substantive view of the subject (Schwab, 1978) and thus each implied a different approach to curriculum. The Cox Report (DES, 1989a) attempted to draw together these varying views of the subject and to present them as being mutually

compatible within a broad approach to the curriculum. However, the Cox Report was laying the foundation of the National Curriculum for English and there was thus a certain amount of vested interest in presenting a view of the subject that could claim to embrace a variety of approaches.

Nevertheless, the ‘Cox models’ of English (see Fig 4.1) have provided a useful yard-stick for examining secondary teachers’ beliefs about English as a subject, despite the fact that critics have argued that the five ‘models’ presented in the Report are not as easy to reconcile with each other as was claimed (Davies, 1989, Snow, 1991, Jones, 1992).

A ‘personal growth’ view focuses on the child:	it emphasises the relationship between language and learning in the individual child, and the role of literature in developing children’s imaginative and aesthetic lives.
A ‘cross-curricular’ view focuses on the school:	it emphasises that all teachers of English and other subjects have a responsibility to help children with the language demands of different subjects on the school curriculum, otherwise areas of the curriculum may be closed to them. In England, English is different from other school subjects in that it is both a subject and a medium of instruction for other subjects.
An ‘adult needs’ view focuses on communication outside the school:	it emphasises the responsibility of English teachers to prepare children for the language demands of adult life, including the workplace, in a fast changing world. Children need to learn to deal with the day-to-day demands of spoken language and of print; they also need to be able to write clearly, appropriately and effectively.
A ‘cultural heritage’ view	emphasises the responsibility of schools to lead children to an appreciation of those works of literature that have been widely regarded as amongst the finest in the language.
A ‘cultural analysis’ view	emphasises the role of English in helping children towards a critical understanding of the world and cultural environment in which they live. Children should know about the processes by which meanings are conveyed and about the ways in which print and other media carry values.

Fig 4.1 The Cox models (reported in Goodwyn and Findlay, 1999).

The research in this area concentrated on secondary, specialist teachers of English and there was no comparable research into primary teachers’ beliefs about the subject. Nevertheless, it may be possible to make some comparisons between secondary English teachers’ views about the subject

and evidence derived from more recent research into primary teachers' beliefs about literacy teaching.

In the 1980's the majority of teachers held a liberal-humanist view of the subject broadly equivalent to the *personal growth* model of the Cox Report (Davies,1992). This view persisted into the 1990s (Goodwyn, 1992). Although Goodwyn and Findlay (1999) found an increase in the proportion of teachers identifying themselves as members of the *cultural analysis* group, following revisions to the National Curriculum for English, those maintaining the *personal growth* view still remained in the overall majority.

Marshall (2000) also investigated English teachers' views, using a research approach in which teachers were asked to align themselves with descriptions of five different types of English teacher (Marshall, 2000: 25-26). Although Marshall did not use the "Cox models" directly, the outcomes of her investigation also indicate that the majority of the teachers in the study held views closest to the *personal growth* model, although, as with Goodwyn and Findlay's (1999) research, a significant minority favoured a view closest to the *cultural analysis* model.

In general, secondary English teachers have maintained a broadly liberal humanist approach to the subject over the past twenty-five years. They value personal response, self-expression and the development of the imagination. They see knowledge about language as important in order to develop facility of expression, rather than as a body of skills. There is some evidence to suggest that similar views were held by primary teachers prior to the introduction of the NLS. This is discussed later in this chapter.

The National Literacy Strategy

The National Literacy Strategy *Framework* was introduced into primary schools in 1998, following recommendations in the 1997 report of the Literacy Task Force: *A Reading revolution: How We Can Teach Every Child to Read Well*. (DfEE, 1997), and based on the work of the National Literacy Project which had begun in 1996. The justifications for the introduction of the NLS were based on evidence from both national tests

and OfSTED inspections (Beard, 1999) and on comparative research, which was seen to indicate a comparatively greater “tail” of pupils’ underachievement in reading in Britain compared with that of other Western nations (Books et al., 1996). The National Strategy was presented as the key to raising standards both for individuals and for the economic benefit of society, so that a form of moral imperative accompanied this unprecedented introduction of a prescribed pedagogy as well as an exceptionally detailed curriculum framework.

Although the *Framework* was said to be based on research evidence, this basis was not made explicit until after its publication. The *NLS Review of Research and Other Related Evidence* (Beard, 1999) reflects the predominating views of English and of education held by central policy makers, rather than offering an analytical or critical perspective on the evidence presented. As such, the arguments presented by Beard (1999) have been criticised in several areas.

Wyse has challenged the claims for the introduction of the NLS based on English inspection evidence, school effectiveness research and child development evidence (Wyse, 2002). Hilton questions the NLS as a mechanism for over-coming social disadvantage by raising standards, arguing that if literacy is conceived as an “autonomous model” it cannot take into account social variation (Hilton, 1998:12). The model of literacy presented within the NLS *Framework* and Beard’s (1999) *Review* has also been challenged (Cox, 1998, Dombey, 1998, Barrs, 2000).

The scale of impact of the NLS on primary teachers, in terms of its wholesale introduction and the continuing stream of supporting materials, has been to create a consensus of acceptance within a very short time, although this has not always been accompanied by an understanding of purpose.

Frater (2000) found that in some schools, a pre-occupation with covering the termly content of the *Framework* had prevented the development of a coherent approach to literacy teaching and led to fragmentation with word

and sentence level work being taught separately from the text level (Frater, 2000:109). Some teachers also found it difficult to accept that any flexibility was possible, despite messages from 'the centre' (Anderson et al., 2000:117). Elsewhere, schools had drawn upon the *Framework*, without being shackled by it and demonstrated whole school approaches to literacy which made connections between language and experience at all levels of learning. Much appeared to depend upon the confidence of the staff in schools as a whole, and on the support provided by senior management. (Frater, 2000: 109).

Urquart (2002) points out that the willingness of the policy leaders to adopt contributions from different theoretical paradigms has undermined "potentially alternative and oppositional knowledges about literacy" (Urquart, 2002:30). It is also the case that some teachers and educationalists who had been concerned about the status of English in the primary curriculum welcomed the NLS. Despite their anxieties about the speed of its introduction and the pressures generated by the initial training, they valued its structure and the emphasis it placed on literacy teaching in schools (Dadds, 1999:7, Fisher and Lewis, 1999:24-25). The level of consensus is evident in the 'common language' used by policy makers, OfSTED inspectors, teachers and children in discussing literacy teaching. This development was noted in the second OfSTED (2000) report on the implementation of the NLS:

(The National Literacy Strategy) has provided a common starting point and a 'common language' for everyone who is involved in the teaching of literacy. (OfSTED, 2000).

As has already been noted, the same common language is embedded in the ITT NC for English.

At first sight the existence of a common language would seem to be beneficial to mentors' engagement with student teachers' literacy teaching. However, questions remain as to whether the 'common language' is also an appropriate language to promote the development of student teachers' personal theories of literacy learning and teaching.

The structure and languages of the NLS *Framework*, and of the ITT NC, promote a particular view of literacy learning, and implicitly generate a particular definition of literacy. The sequence of “word, sentence and text level” objectives, reiterated throughout all NLS publications, and the physical, left to right layout of the objectives in that order in the termly structure, predicates a linguistically dominated model of literacy learning, with a focus on technical accuracy (Marshall, 1998:7, Urquart, 2002:29).

In popular terms, literacy is seen as “the ability to read and write” (Oxford English Dictionary, 1996). However, this is a limited conception of literacy, which is not merely being able to decode print, or being able to demonstrate technical competence in writing, but to be able to make meaning through the interaction of reader and text and to make connections with pupils’ real life experiences (Dombey, 1998, Medwell et al., 1988, Dadds, 1999, Barrs, 2000). Additionally, models of “twenty-first century” literacy which broaden the notion of text to include spoken, visual and performance texts as well as written versions and to acknowledge the role of new technologies in changing literacy practices (Dombey, 1998, Hodgson, Moss and Shreeve, 2000) are barely evident in the NLS *Framework*.

These two models of literacy, while not mutually exclusive, resonate with the two paradigms of ITET discussed in the previous chapter.

Primary teachers’ views about literacy

There have been two studies relating to primary teachers’ beliefs and values specifically in relation to literacy. One was the large-scale investigation commissioned by the TTA and conducted by Medwell et al. during the period 1996-8, before the widespread introduction of the NLS (Medwell et al., 1998). The other was a smaller scale project carried out by Dadds and colleagues in 1998/9 as the NLS was beginning to affect teachers’ views of literacy teaching. (Dadds, 1999).

Medwell et al. examined the subject knowledge, experience, and reported beliefs and practices of teachers identified as being effective teachers of literacy (see Medwell et al., 1998:105 for further details). The research was

conducted through a questionnaire survey of 228 teachers, observation of literacy lessons and interviews with 26 teachers, and finally a 'quiz' about teachers' English subject knowledge. Their findings were compared with a validation group of 71 teachers who were mathematics co-ordinators in primary schools and with a group of 74 student (novice) teachers.

The team found that effective teachers of literacy were more likely to articulate their philosophy of primary literacy in terms of the creation of meaning. They were able to help pupils "to make connections between language at text, sentence and word levels" (Wray et al., 1999:17). Less effective teachers, as in Frater's study (2000), often separated these technical aspects of language learning from contexts for meaning and taught through discrete activities. Effective literacy teachers were found to have greater coherence in their beliefs about literacy teaching than the comparison group. They placed a high priority on "purpose, communication and composition" (Medwell et al., 1998:25) and observation of their teaching activities showed that "they tended to favour teaching activities which explicitly emphasised the deriving and creating of meaning" (Medwell et al., 1998:31).

These "effective teachers" did not, however, have strong subject-matter knowledge in English, in terms of knowledge of language structures and terminology on the basis of the 'quiz' (Medwell et al., 1998: 15-16). In tests divorced from classroom settings they did not perform markedly better than a comparison sample of teachers. However, when presented with matters of subject knowledge in practical contexts, such as errors in pupils' work, these teachers performed much better (Medwell et al., 1998:19).

The outcomes of Medwell et al's (1998) research indicate that beliefs about literacy learning as a process of making meaning for pupils, and the ability to help pupils make conceptual connections between aspects of language and texts, are central to effective teaching. The differences in belief and pedagogical approaches between the effective teachers and the less effective teachers of literacy in the sample, can be seen as further instances of

contrast between a technical or training, model and a more reflective, meaning-led model of educational practice.

Dadds (1999) smaller scale research indicates similar findings. Dadds and a group of teacher researchers examined the relationship between primary teachers' values and the Literacy Hour through a range of strategies, depending on context. Initial findings indicated some views about literacy that were consistently held across the group, although to greater or lesser degrees.

Literacy was seen as communication of meaning in a broader sense than competence in reading and writing; as embedded in children's lives and learning and not a set of discrete skills, and as requiring "purpose" for pupils. These findings are thus consistent with those of Medwell et al., (1998) in their larger scale investigation. However, the teachers in Dadds' study placed a higher value on children's personal lives and imaginative experience than was apparent from the research of Medwell et al., where the structure of the questionnaire and interview schedule did not explicitly offer respondents the opportunity to express these views.

In Dadds' study some teachers emphasised the importance of drawing on children's out of school literacies and cultural practices and many expressed a strong belief in the importance of personal response and creative opportunity within literacy teaching. Teachers saw literacy as both 'functional' and expressive' and expressed concerns that the Literacy Hour might reduce opportunities for creative spoken and written language (Dadds, 1999:13-14).

Personal responses to text, whether spoken read or written, and the affective dimension of literacy learning were regarded as essential (Dadds, 1999: 15), and the teachers in the study were still clearly child-centred, rather than curriculum-centred in their beliefs:

These teachers still have the children firmly at the centre of their work. They claim to value the right of children to

have their identity and preferences placed within their literacy experiences (Dadds, 1999:17).

As with the majority of secondary English teachers, the teachers in Dadds' study appeared to view literacy as a vehicle for personal growth in the first instance. Dadds later undertook a follow-on questionnaire with experienced teachers ('round table' session, BERA Conference, University of Leeds, 2002). These teachers had found some of their personal values confirmed through working with the Literacy Hour, such as those relating to the value of real texts and teaching higher level literacy strategies. However Dadds found less emphasis on creativity in their responses, and an awareness that the NLS had meant a shift in emphasis away from literacy meaning to literacy structure.

The research evidence indicates that a "meaning-led" approach to literacy teaching may be more effective than a purely skills based approach (Medwell et al., 1998, Frater, 2000), and that explicit subject-matter knowledge in English is not a necessary pre-requisite for effective literacy teaching. The substantial emphasis on subject matter knowledge within the NLS and ITT NC may create an imbalance in mentors' conceptions of subject knowledge in English and thus influence their work with student teachers.

Additionally, the NLS and NNS recommend particular pedagogical approaches to support pupils' literacy learning: in particular, that of 'interactive whole class teaching' (DfEE 1999c,1999d). This form of classroom discourse is intended to increase pupils' participation in lessons and to encourage them to make more sustained contributions. However, research is indicating that since the introduction of the NLS the outcomes of whole class teaching are different from those intended (Mroz et al., 2000,English et al., 2002, Hardman et al, 2003).

Far from encouraging and extending pupil contributions to promote higher levels of interaction and cognitive engagement, the majority of the time teachers' questions are closed and require convergent factual answers...only

rarely are teachers' questions used to assist pupils to more compete or elaborated ideas (Hardman et al, 2003: 212).

Although English et al., (2002) show that teachers can be supported to reflect critically on their classroom interaction styles, the results of these research investigations raise questions in respect of mentors' work with students teaching literacy lessons in terms of the discussion of pedagogical practice.

The impact of the NLS on student teachers' teaching of English lessons.

The results of the examination of effective literacy teachers' beliefs (Medwell et al., 1998, Poulson, Avramidis et al., 2001) and of Dadds' questionnaire can be compared with the findings of Twiselton's examination of student teachers' views of their role in English teaching (Twiselton and Webb, 1998, Twiselton 2000,2002). Twiselton's research covers the period before and immediately after the introduction of the NLS and thus provides a valuable insight into the impact of a prescribed curriculum on student teachers' learning.

Through classroom observation and interviews with student teachers, Twiselton identified three broad categories describing students' attitudes to literacy teaching: "Task Managers" who were concerned primarily with task completion rather than learning; "Curriculum Deliverers" – students working with a given curriculum who tended to regard objectives as "ends within themselves rather than as contributing to a broader framework of concepts and skills associated with the subject"; and "Concept/Skill Builders", who were able to link their learning objectives, and the tasks provided for pupils, to a broader understanding of English (Twiselton, 2000).

Prior to the introduction of the NLS these categories were evenly distributed among students during the process of training with Task Managers being more widespread in the early stages of training, and Concept/Skill Builders towards the final stages. Twiselton saw this as evidence of progression in student teachers' thinking and these findings are consistent with other research into the thinking of novice and expert teachers and the

development of student teachers' understanding of learning and teaching (Furlong and Maynard, 1995, Tochon and Munby, 1993).

Subsequent to the introduction of the NLS, Twiselton found a significant change in the categories identified in a group of eighteen students, studied in depth in 1998. Seventeen of the eighteen students demonstrated attributes of the Curriculum Deliverer category; only one student emerged as being mainly within the Concept/Skill Builder category and no student was mainly within the Task Manager group. From these findings Twiselton argues that the detailed curriculum provided by the NLS helped novice teachers focus on learning, rather than on tasks from the beginning of their training, but that the level of detail also prevented students from seeing the 'bigger picture' and

limits their ability, or decreases their rate of development, in constructing fuller frameworks for understanding the structures of subjects. A restricted or tentative understanding of the subject is likely to limit student teachers' ability to scaffold children effectively (Twiselton, 2000: 402).

If Twiselton's findings are duplicated across ITET institutions, the role of mentors in supporting and challenging students to move beyond this restricted view of literacy will be vital. However, much will depend on mentors' own views of literacy teaching, and how and in what ways these have been influenced by the NLS *Framework* and related pedagogical approaches.

Medwell et al., (1998) show that teachers' beliefs about the nature and purpose of literacy are significant in terms of more or less effective teaching. Equally, Twiselton's findings indicate that trainees' beliefs about the nature and purpose of teaching and learning are significant in terms of the development of their understanding of the subject. These findings raise questions concerning the nature of mentors' beliefs about English/literacy.

- what do the mentors believe about subject knowledge in English/literacy as a subject, and what has influenced their beliefs?

- how might these beliefs affect their work with student teachers?

The above questions will be considered in Chapter Ten.

CHAPTER FIVE

Concepts of mentoring.

Introduction: two views of mentoring.

The previous chapters have discussed two alternative views of teachers' subject knowledge in English, and of the role of school experience in the professional development of novice teachers. The dominant discourse over the past twenty years has been that of policy makers who have promoted strong centralised control over the curriculum, and who hold a view of ITET with a strong bias towards a 'training' model. This view has been supported by a system of rewards and sanctions based on the outcomes of inspection of schools and ITET provision.

At the same time, teachers' working conditions, career progression and pay structures have been re-modelled with a greater emphasis on performativity, which matches the outcomes-led model of current curricula. This managerialist approach has developed a 'new professionalism' (Troman, 1995) amongst teachers, especially those trained within the last ten to fifteen years (Osborn et al., 2000).

However, the development of a this new culture in schools and HEI has not completely suppressed or eradicated other beliefs and values about the purpose of primary education, or the teaching of English or literacy in primary schools (for example: Osborn et.al., Woods and Jeffrey, 1997, Gipps, 1999, Dadds, 1999, Harnett and Newman, 2002),

This chapter considers the role of the mentor in primary schools. In the views of both the 'trainers' and the 'educationalists' the mentor plays a pivotal role in introducing the novice teacher to the professional culture.

The 'training' model of mentoring.

The training model is based on the 'common-sense' view (for example: Lawlor, 1990, O'Hear, 1988) that teaching is a skill-based enterprise. This

technical-rationalist view (Kydd and Weir, 1993) has frequently been described as an apprenticeship model (for example: McIntyre and Hagger, 1993, Fish, 1995) and assumes that trainee teachers will automatically learn to teach if placed in the classrooms of exponents of “good practice”. The role of the teacher mentor is thus fairly straightforward: they provide a model which the novice can initially imitate, and they “attend the trainees’ classes and guide their preparation and organisation of lessons” (Lawlor, 1995:135).

This model underpinned the initial development of the Licensed Teacher Scheme (DES, 1988c), in which the mentor was identified as the key player in the training process. HEI would only be involved with licensed teachers at the employing authority’s request. Although the Licensed Teacher Scheme was relatively short-lived, variations on this model have continued to develop, such as School Centred ITT and the Graduate and Registered Teacher Schemes. In these training routes to QTS, the involvement of HEI is either optional, or minimalised.

The ‘common sense’ view of ITT and of mentoring does not require specific skills or knowledge on the part of the mentor, other than those of a ‘good teacher’. Thus, there is little requirement for professional training for mentors. However, research conducted into mentoring practice on articulated teacher schemes (Jacques, 1992, Elliot and Calderhead, 1993, Corbett and Wright, 1993) and in early types of partnership training such as the Oxford Internship scheme (Benton, 1990, McIntyre, 1990) suggested that the mentor’s role was more complex than the training model suggests.

Elliot and Calderhead (1993) found that mentors of articulated teachers in primary schools at the end of the first year of the two-year training period. tended to characterise themselves as “friends” or “good listeners” (Elliot and Calderhead 1993: 175). They often saw their role as being organisational: providing for the experiences required by the tasks set by the HEI, and supportive rather than developmental. The majority of mentors in the study saw growth in teaching primarily as the ability to progress from working with individuals, through groups to taking the whole class, rather

than as intellectual development. They were reluctant to challenge the ideas or images of teaching held by their mentees, and felt that 'challenge' was inappropriate for novice teachers (Elliot and Calderhead, 1993: 177-181). This reluctance appeared to stem from both a lack of appropriate language with which to discuss alternative models of learning and teaching, and a lack of understanding of adult learning.

McIntyre & Hagger (1993:90-94) identify the limitations of an apprenticeship approach in terms of the possible idiosyncrasy of individual mentors; arbitrariness of judgement if there is no moderation, and, most importantly, the dangers of not recognising or valuing personal beliefs and not fully acknowledging the need to see the trainee teacher as an adult. Unless school based mentors are equipped with appropriate supervisory knowledge and skills, they argue, there is a strong possibility that the trainee teacher will not be encouraged to question or reflect on their own beliefs about teaching, but will be treated more directive.

Both Elliot and Calderhead (1993) and McIntyre and Hagger (1993) based their criticisms of the training model on an assumption that reflection on practice is an essential component of ITET. This assumption underpins the majority of the literature on mentoring, which can thus be said to represent the 'educationalist' view.

The educationalist model of mentoring.

This view assumes a commitment to learning through reflection on, and analysis of, practice as opposed to the development of a task oriented technician (Goodman 1987, Fish, 1995, Furlong and Maynard, 1995, Tomlinson, 1995, Edwards and Collison, 1996). In order to support the process of reflection, mentors will require certain skills and personal attributes, coupled with knowledge of issues concerning adult learning and teacher development (Corbett and Wright, 1993, Smith and Westburnham, 1993, Sampson and Yeomans, 1994, Edwards and Collison, 1996). High on the list are skills such as effective listening, being able to give formative feedback, appropriate target setting and conflict resolution.

In this model, mentoring is a complex activity with its own practical knowledge and is not reducible to a set of procedures. This is distinct from the practical knowledge developed by teachers through working with younger pupils, and it should not be assumed that effective class teachers will automatically be effective mentors of student teachers (McIntyre and Hagger, 1993, Elliot and Calderhead, 1995, Edwards and Collison, 1996). Also embedded within the concept of effective mentoring associated with the educationalist view of ITET is an assumption that mentors will, or should, have a concept of professionalism which extends beyond the local and immediate school environment.

The development of these skills and knowledge suggests an extended process of professional development for mentors. However, financial constraints operating on HEI, and the difficulties associated with releasing primary teachers from classrooms for extended periods of time, have meant that opportunities for mentor development have become increasingly curtailed. The skills of classroom observation, of effective feedback, and of summative assessment against externally determined criteria, which often form the content of mentor training programmes, do not necessarily prepare teachers as professional educators.

A common theme in the literature concerned with mentoring and the mentor's role is that effective mentoring is active and interventionist (Wilkin, 1995, Edwards & Collison, 1996). Such a role requires a number of discrete skills including those of observation, feedback and target setting, but all need to operate within the context of "moving the student on" (Furlong and Maynard 1995: 92). For this to happen, it is necessary for the mentor to have a vision or goal towards which they are aiming in their work with the student teacher.

The educational values and beliefs of the mentor about teaching and learning at both the level of the pupils and of the student are thus central to the mentoring process, and (usually implicitly) reveal the mentor's definition of what it means to be a professional, as Martin (1996:25) suggests:

Mentoring is complex, not least because although the novice teacher's professional development is the central focus, this is influenced by the individual personalities of the subject mentor and the novice teacher, the novice's individual needs (their starting point and the 'baggage they bring with them), and the mentor novice relationship which will itself change over the course of the programme.

Mentoring in the primary school.

There are some significant differences between mentoring in secondary schools and mentoring in primary schools. In the secondary school the student teacher's focus is usually on the teaching of one or two subjects. Thus the relationship between content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge more closely resembles that outlined by Shulman (1995) and discussed in Chapter Three. In most current models of secondary ITET the student teacher normally works with the classes of their subject mentor, possibly those of other members of the subject department and also with a "professional mentor" who works with student teachers across departments to support generic professional learning. The student teacher in secondary school may thus be exposed to a range of teaching styles and approaches during a single placement period. S/he will also be seeking to establish learning relationships with more than one member of the school staff.

The situation of most student teachers in primary schools, in contrast, revolves around a relationship with a single individual. The class teacher, with whom the primary student teacher will spend the majority of their time during a placement period, may or may not also be the designated mentor for the student, but they will be a highly influential figure in the student teacher's professional development (Hayes, 1999b, Maynard, 2000). The student teacher in the primary school will also be teaching across a broad range of subject areas, depending on the age range for which they are training. They may not have the opportunity to engage with the pedagogical transformation of their subject-matter knowledge in any depth, nor to have the opportunity to discuss subject related issues with other subject specialists. An emphasis on the need to deliver the National Curriculum has

diverted attention away from the need to engage primary student teachers with issues of pupil learning towards task completion and assessment. (Edwards, 1998:53).

Two main modes of mentoring operation have developed in primary ITET over the past decade, one in which the class teacher is the recognised mentor, and provides formal feedback and assessment in addition to support and guidance. The alternative mode identifies an experienced teacher who acts as a mentor for student teachers throughout the school. This approach to some extent separates out the “two sides” of mentoring (Cameron-Jones, 1993), but also seeks to lessen the possible isolation of the student teacher inherent in the first mode, and to promote a “whole school” approach to ITET. In some cases, primary ITET partnerships have established both roles in schools (for example Maynard 2000). However, Maynard (2000) reports that some primary PGCE student teachers in her study found that their senior mentor provided more effective support than their class mentors, whose ‘advice’ was sometimes highly directive (Maynard 2000: 28).

There are some dangers in the primary mentoring approach in which the class teacher is also the student’s main mentor, but there are potentially significant advantages. Both revolve around the notion of apprenticeship. In the naïve view of apprenticeship in school based ITT, apocryphally termed “sitting next to Nelly”, a transmission model of knowledge operates in which the student teacher develops the skills of teaching through observation, imitation and instruction by the mentor. In the notion of apprenticeship developed by Lave and Wenger (1991) knowledge is conceived as socially situated and constructed, within communities of practice. Knowledge is thus developed through participation within the community, initially as a peripheral participant, learning through observation and the co-construction of knowledge through engagement. These two notions of apprenticeship are underpinned by very different epistemological assumptions. As Edwards (1998: 55) explains:

Situated cognition takes a particularly innovative line which is entirely dependent on its focus on learning as *becoming* through participation in activities rather than a view of

learning only as knowledge to be acquired and then deployed in contexts.

Taking this view of the construction of knowledge for teaching, the class teacher engages in interactive mentoring: mentoring while teaching (Edwards and Collison, 1996: 52). Again, certain levels of skill, conceptual understanding and self-awareness are required in this mode of primary mentoring (Edwards and Collison, 1996:61-63), which are not necessarily intrinsic in all primary teachers (Hayes, 1999b, Maynard 2000).

The second mode of primary mentoring, where the mentor is not necessarily the class teacher, owes much to previous models of ITE and the role of the supervising tutor. These mentors are usually experienced teachers who have agreed to take on the role, and who thus have a commitment to school-based ITET. While it offers some professional distance from the immediate concerns of the classroom and thus more potential for generalising from practice through reflective discussion, some of the learning opportunities to be gained through the alternative mode of primary mentoring may be reduced. This will depend on the culture of the school and the experience of the class teachers with whom student teachers are placed.

Tensions in mentoring

Despite the emphasis within the mentoring literature on the professional education dimension, mentors do not always appear to recognise this as a significant element of their role. They place a high priority on being an advisor, a trainer, an assessor, and a counselor, but a lower priority on being a “teacher” in the mentoring relationship (Jones, 2001). Wright and Bottery (1997) also found that mentors gave low priority to discussing broader professional issues in their interactions with student teachers in secondary schools. Mentors in both primary and secondary schools appear to place a high priority on the interpersonal dimension of their relationship, especially that of giving positive feedback (Jones, 2001), sometimes at the expense of engaging with more challenging issues, or the wider educational agenda (Edwards and Ogden, 1998, Burgess and Butcher, 1999).

The tensions between the roles of mentor as critical friend and mentor as assessor which were felt in the earlier stages of the development of mentoring in schools (Cameron-Jones, 1993), appear to have lessened as the mentoring culture has become established in schools. In Jones' (2001) comparative study of secondary mentors in England and Germany, members of her English sample group placed the role of the assessor in the top three aspects of mentoring in terms of importance. Some of this increased security may well be the result of the restricted, but tightly specified view of qualified teacher status contained in the competences of Circulars 9/92 and 14/93 (DfEE, 1992,1993) and the Standards for the Award of Qualified Teacher Status (DfEE, 1998b,TTA, 2002). Nevertheless, despite the apparent increase in mentors' confidence, tensions remain for both student teachers and mentors as a result of the dual responsibilities of assessor and critical friend which militate against the kinds of discussion which would expose questions of values and belief. Conflicting or unacknowledged differences in values and beliefs could also affect the assessment process (Hayes, 1999a: 9), and there is evidence that student teachers tailor their behaviours to minimise risk in this regard. (Haggarty, 1995, Hayes, 1999b).

Edwards (1997) analysed first year student teachers' conversations with class teachers before and after lessons taught by the student. She found that both class teacher and student teacher were effectively limiting the possibilities for failure, but also limiting the opportunities for the student teacher's learning by concentrating on the implementation of tasks rather than on the learning of the children. Edwards suggests that this situation arose from the necessity for the student teachers to position themselves as "fellow teachers" rather than as learners in order to "fit in" to the school and classroom. In this way they became "actors who through that mode of self-presentation render their own learning needs invisible" (Edwards, 1997:34).

'Fitting in' to the context of the placement is often perceived as a source of tension for students (Hayes, 2001). Maynard (2000) found that student teachers had to "manage" their relationship with their class mentor sensitively if they were to succeed in their placement. This sometimes

meant conforming to the class mentor's advice or practice, even when it conflicted with the beliefs of the student teacher (Maynard, 2000: 28).

"Being willing" is often a positive attribute in primary mentors' eyes (Hayes 1999b) and most student teachers are likely to learn quickly that giving a positive response to mentors' advice gains its own rewards. The longer term professional consequences of these experiences might be less conducive to the development of a reflective professional stance, however:

The sample of mentors who stressed the importance for students to listen and learn appeared to be offering a view of modeling good practice which relied largely on students' acceptance of the existing pedagogy rather than shaping and refining their own beliefs and ideas. (Hayes, 1999b; 74).

It must also be recognised that some students resist the mentor's attempt to challenge their existing practice, perhaps because of their existing values and beliefs; because they are comfortable operating at their present level of development (the "plateau" stage identified by Furlong and Maynard, 1995) or because, as Martin (1996:29) says:

It is important to recognise the often unspoken needs of novice teachers to be confirmed as teachers before they will venture out and try to address something outside this agenda.

Effective mentoring thus requires a recognition of these tensions and an awareness of the unspoken, and often unacknowledged, needs of the learner.

Stages in learning to teach.

In addition to possessing a professional vision, developing the mentoring skills required to support student teachers' learning, and accepting the need to intervene actively in student teachers' learning, mentors-as-professional-educators need to have an understanding of stages of teacher development. Without this understanding, they may be unable to intervene effectively in their student's professional learning by matching their mentoring style to the

needs of the learner (for example: McIntyre and Hagger, 1993, Furlong and Maynard, 1995, Campbell and Kane, 1999).

Researchers have generally agreed that novice teachers pass through various stages of development, although some of these stages can occur concurrently (Fuller and Bown, 1975, Calderhead, 1987, Guillaume and Rudney, 1993). These stages continue to be evident in the post-training period as teachers progress towards a possible “expert” status (Berliner, 1987, Turner-Bissett, 2001).

Furlong and Maynard (1995) identified five broad stages of development in the trainee teachers they observed as part of their research which they characterise as “early idealism; personal survival; dealing with difficulties; hitting a plateau and moving on” (Furlong and Maynard, 1995:73-99). Like Guillaume and Rudney (1993), Furlong and Maynard found that trainee teachers’ progress through these stages was “fragmentary and uneven” and that the stages were not discrete but recurred with different contextual features as the trainees gained more experience and thus considered issues differently (Furlong and Maynard, 1995:98). In order to be effective, mentors-as-professional-educators require some appreciation of these developmental possibilities.

Possibly the most significant stage in Furlong and Maynard’s model, in some respects, is that of the “plateau” stage (Furlong and Maynard, 1995: 89-92). Having apparently mastered a set of teacher behaviours, often by imitation, student teachers can resist attempts to move their learning beyond this point. They hold a teacher-centred idea of effective practice, and are not able, or perhaps willing, to shift their perspective to that of the pupil as learner, or to acknowledge the limitations of their understanding about pupil learning. In Furlong and Maynard’s (1995) study this manifested itself in views of learning as transmission (Furlong and Maynard, 1995: 90), and also in the adoption of “teacherly” language that was inappropriately applied. For example, with the use of the phrase “active learning”, where some student teachers applied this to any activity involving physical movement, or to any practical activity such as cutting and glueing.

For student teachers in the plateau stage, learning to prioritise the pupils' learning as against their own desire to be "seen" as a teacher can be risky and painful. It involves moving towards an ability to analyse the complexity of the classroom setting in action and to respond accordingly, rather than delivering a prepared lesson or curriculum package; to be able to improvise when needed, as well as to perform; to begin the journey from novice to expert practitioner (Berliner, 1987, Tochon and Munby, 1993). It is not always the case that student or novice teachers will make this transition without intervention (Furlong and Maynard, 1995: 92).

Mentors-as-professional-educators need an understanding of the often implicit nature of practical personal knowledge or craft knowledge (Elbaz, 1983, Clandenin and Connelly, 1988, Brown and McIntyre, 1993) and a willingness and an ability to work with the trainee to make this explicit. Such a process can sometimes be challenging both personally and intellectually for the mentor. Just as student teachers may bring preconceptions about learning and teaching and about particular subjects to their initial training, which can have a powerful influence on their professional development, mentors too will have personal beliefs and preconceptions. Thus mentors need not only to be able to recognize, and if necessary challenge, student teachers' preconceptions, but also to recognize their own (Tomlinson, 1995). Mentors thus need to be able to articulate their own values and to be able to enter into discussion with student teachers in a way that enables these issues to be examined in a non-threatening context.

In responding to the differing requirements of the varying stages of student development, and in recognising their recursive nature, mentors will need to maintain a judicious mixture of support and challenge in their work with student teachers.

Support and challenge

The concepts of support and challenge as pre-requisites for professional growth in teaching derive from Daloz (1986) and have been developed and extended by the work of subsequent writers (Elliot & Calderhead 1995,

Furlong and Maynard 1995, Martin 1996, Edwards & Collison 1996, Cameron Jones and O'Hara 1997, Burgess & Butcher 1999). Much of the discussion has focused on the mentor's skills in selecting the appropriate balance of 'support' - providing a comfortable environment in which to practise and reinforce skills and understanding of aspects of teaching – and 'challenge' – encouraging students to re-assess aspects of their practice, and sometimes to reject previously held beliefs or attitudes in order to re-formulate these through a process of cognitive dissonance (Kagan, 1992). In practice, however, mentors have not always found it easy to operate in both dimensions, particularly that of 'challenge'.

Edwards and Collison found that some primary mentors were reluctant to criticise students in case this was de-motivating. (Edwards & Collison, 1996:38) and it appears that some of these mentors regarded challenging a student as a potentially confrontational and critical encounter. Burgess and Butcher identify the same phenomenon and note that some primary mentors prefer to use phrases such as "support" and "take forward" to describe their intervention in students' development (Burgess & Butcher, 1999: 45).

The research of Cameron and O'Hara (1997) again demonstrates the fact that teachers offered higher degrees of support than challenge, but also indicates that the challenges which they felt they had offered to their students were not always perceived as such by the students themselves (Cameron-Jones and O'Hara, 1997: 19-20). Martin (1996) describes a similar example where a student teacher experiencing difficulties, at first regarded his mentor's actions as purely supportive, and only later recognised the challenge inherent in the questioning process that had been undertaken. The argument here is that support and challenge both need to be high, in order for the student teacher to feel "confirmed" before "growth" is possible (Martin, 1996).

Support can be offered both through the structuring of the student teachers' experiences in school and through the use of positive feedback on their

achievements. Challenge, involving the deliberate introduction of cognitive dissonance into the student teachers' experience, is difficult to initiate outside the context of a discussion between student teacher and mentor.

Mentoring Conversations

Literature on mentoring generally places considerable emphasis on the "mentoring conversation" (Edwards and Collison, 1996) as a significant activity in developing student teachers' ideas about teaching, challenging preconceptions and opening up new areas for consideration. (Fish 1989, 1995, Tomlinson, 1995) However, research evidence suggests that discussions between student teachers and mentors do not often fulfill this function.

Haggarty (1995) undertook content analysis of discussions between five secondary mathematics subject mentors and their ten students and noted that some mentors spent little time discussing students' developing theories of mathematics learning. It was also noticeable that very little disagreement between students and mentors occurred, despite the fact that Haggarty knew the students were critical of aspects of practice within the school: "the lack of an open and honest dialogue would not be likely to help their understanding and subsequent learning" (Haggarty, 1995: 196).

Examinations of mentors' conversations with students in primary classrooms at the pre- and post- lesson stage (Edwards and Collison, 1996, Edwards and Ogden, 1998) found that little generalization from the specific concerns of the lesson took place. It was generally the case that mentors' questions, comments and advice were closely focused on the immediate lesson and few attempts were made to engage students in discussion or reflection on more general issues which could have developed from the specific situations.

Edwards and Protheroe (2003) examined the experiences of primary PGCE student teachers drawn from two HEI through an open-ended questionnaire administered to all students and case studies of twelve students. Discussions took place in the context of formal feedback after observed sessions, rather

than as a result of shared practice and consequently tended to focus on heavily situated knowledge of individual learners, within the context of curriculum delivery, and on

polishing the visible performance of student teachers in ways that diverted the attention of student teachers from a primary concern with the promotion of pupil learning (Edwards and Protheroe, 2003:230).

Mentoring conversations undoubtedly have the potential to support the development of reflection on action by both mentor and student teacher, but the research evidence from these studies of primary mentoring suggest that this potential is not being realized. The reasons for this may be due to an inappropriate mode of mentoring practice, as Edwards and Protheroe (2003) suggest. It is likely that other factors, such as the student teacher's desire to be regarded as a teacher, the need for the student teacher to fit in to the culture of the school in order to succeed, and the pressures generated by the current curriculum models may also act as constraints on the tentativeness and openness required by both partners in reflective mentoring conversations.

Mentoring for subject knowledge in the primary school

As has already been discussed in Chapters Two and Three, an increasing focus on the primacy of subject teaching in the primary school, established by the ERA, has been accompanied by increasing emphasis on student teachers' subject knowledge and "subject application" in primary schools (DfEE, 1993, DfEE 1998, TTA 2002,2003).

The widespread development of primary mentoring, in response to the ITT Circulars of the 1990s (DfEE 1993, DfEE, 1998), occurred following the initial period of curriculum change after the ERA. The subject focused, primary national curriculum was an established feature of school culture, even though some primary teachers were still engaging in differing forms of accommodation to its requirements (Pollard et al., 1994).

Studies of mentoring and subject knowledge in primary schools were undertaken by Maynard (1996), and Edwards and Ogden (1998). The study undertaken by Maynard (1996) took the form of a series of action research projects, designed by individual teachers with a focus on discrete subject areas, with a view to examining the possibilities and constraints on subject mentoring in primary schools. Those of Edwards and Ogden (1998) were based on analysis of tape recordings of mentoring conversations.

The teachers in Maynard's study at first resisted the concept of subject knowledge in terms of its relevance for primary teaching. They conceived it in terms of subject-matter knowledge or content knowledge, as "pushing facts in" (Maynard, 1996:41), and in opposition to the child-centred view of enabling pupils to make meaning from their experiences. Although some mentors' views about the significance of subject knowledge changed over the duration of the project, they did not appear to alter their fundamental beliefs about learning, but rather developed a more complex view of subject knowledge, particularly in relation to an underpinning appreciation of the purpose and structure of subjects (Maynard, 1996:42). They also appreciated that some difficulties experienced by student teachers could be attributed to a lack of subject understanding.

However, putting this more complex understanding of subject knowledge into place within their mentoring activities with student teachers proved more problematic. The students often avoided discussion around the broader principles of the subject in favour of their own perceived practical needs (Maynard, 1996: 46).

In conclusion, Maynard considers that the mentors' beliefs about encouraging students to adopt child-centred teaching methods were pre-eminent, and constrained their ability, and possibly willingness, to engage with subject focused mentoring (Maynard, 1996:53-54).

Approaching the issue of subject knowledge from a different perspective, based on the work of Lave and Wenger (1991) on situated cognition,

Edwards and Ogden (1998) undertook an analysis of fifteen mentoring conversations between final placement student teachers and their mentors. Although there were a significant number of references to subject content (55% for science, 36% for mathematics and 20% for religious education), discussion about transforming that knowledge into meaningful learning for pupils occurred less frequently than discussion about task implementation or references to subject-matter knowledge (Edwards and Ogden, 1998:744). The conversations tended to be descriptive and did not develop more general principles for learning and teaching on the basis of the student teacher's practical experience.

These two investigations into mentoring and subject knowledge took place prior to the introduction of the NLS and NNS and the ITT NC. Edwards and Protheroe's (2003) study, discussed above, was undertaken as the national strategies were being introduced in schools. In this context, the student teachers' priorities were focused on curriculum delivery, as with the student teachers in Twiselton's (2000) findings, discussed in Chapter Four.

The role of the HEI.

Current policy relating to ITET, discussed in Chapter Two, adopts a rhetoric of partnership in terms of the relationship between primary schools and HEI. However, the requirements of the policy documentation potentially reduce the contribution of the HEI to a quality monitoring role. HEIs, not individual schools, are answerable for the quality of student training and performance. Ensuring compliance with the changing series of Circulars (DfE, 1993, DfEE, 1998, TTA 2002) and responding to the biennial OfSTED inspection process has reduced opportunities for exploratory professional dialogue with colleagues in schools. As Furlong (2002:24) points out

In recent years, the form and content of many courses (of ITE) has become increasingly bureaucratic and the opportunities for influencing the detail of what goes on in

school – where student teachers now spend so much of their time – is limited.

Nevertheless, both schools and student teachers value the distinctive contribution of the HEI to ITET. Williams and Soares (2002) found that mentors in the primary schools in their survey, covering three primary undergraduate partnerships, saw the HEI taking the lead in terms of access to the latest research evidence, subject expertise and moderation of student competence. Mentors also felt that the major responsibility for supporting the development of students' subject knowledge should lie with the HEI.

One respondent commented:

Teaching of subject knowledge should be the responsibility of the HEI mainly because of the specialist knowledge required and the mentor's specialist area might not be the same as the student's (Williams and Soares, 2002:95).

Interestingly, both mentors and students in the survey felt the HEI had a significant role to play in enabling students to reflect on their experience. Teachers were seen as being "too close to their work to be objective enough" according to one respondent (Williams and Soares, 2002: 100).

This view runs counter to those that see reflection on, and generalisation from practice as being an aspect of teacher professionalism developed in student teachers through participation within 'communities of practice'. If this view is shared by other mentors, it provides some explanation for the lack of generalisation and wider reflection noted in mentoring conversations. (Haggarty 1995, Edwards and Collison, 1996, Edwards and Ogden, 1998, Edwards and Protheroe, 2003).

The literature on mentoring, particularly in primary schools, identifies a tension between "child-centred" and "subject-focused" approaches to the curriculum. This tension was also identified in Chapter Two, which considered differing views of teacher professionalism, and it seems likely

that concepts of professionalism will impact directly on mentors' beliefs about English/literacy teaching, in addition to their beliefs about the subject. In the same way that beliefs about a subject have been seen to affect the quality of teaching and learning, beliefs about the nature of teacher professionalism and thus about the nature of teaching itself are likely to affect mentoring practices with student teachers.

Mentors' beliefs concerning professional learning may therefore place greater or lesser emphasis on stages of teacher development and on the role of reflective dialogue in the process of professional growth, which are central themes in much of the literature concerning mentoring skills and understanding.

The question as to how mentors' beliefs about teacher development are evidenced in their mentoring practice is considered in Chapter Eleven. Chapter Twelve also considers how far mentors engage student teachers in generalising from their experiences in order to develop their professional understanding of English teaching.

SUMMARY

A personal view

I have argued that the beliefs of primary mentors, concerning the nature of English, the nature of professional learning and the nature of professionalism, are central to their practice in working with student teachers. In this short final discussion of the issues arising from the literature it is therefore important to locate my own position in respect of some of the tensions and oppositional stances I have identified in preceding chapters.

I selected the subject of English as a focus for the research investigation because I had personal concerns that the implementation of the NLS might militate against a meaning-led philosophy of primary English teaching. I felt that the skills based approach fostered by early interpretations of the NLS, (Frater 2000), was detrimental to longer-term development in literacy. I was also extremely concerned about the impact that technical approaches to literacy teaching promoted by schools would have on student teachers – a concern strengthened by the work of Twiselton (2000). The research investigation grew out of these concerns and my desire to find out the actuality of mentors' practices in terms of primary English/literacy teaching.

This interest extended to the issue of subject knowledge for teaching. Even where writers have rejected the simplistic view of subject knowledge for teaching as being entirely content based (Shulman 1995, Turner-Bissett, 1999) there has still been the tendency to attempt to develop taxonomies of knowledge bases. As we have seen, such approaches can lead to the belief that such knowledge bases can be developed independently (Marks 1990), with a potential for the development of reductionist attitudes towards knowledge for teaching. My own view, based on my reading of the literature, is that these attempts to isolate features of knowledge for teaching are ultimately not helpful. Throughout this dissertation I will return to the work of Banks et al., (1996) who characterise professional knowledge as

actively created *in practice*. Although the separate elements of content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge and school knowledge may be identifiable to some extent they have meaning only in combination, mediated by the personal beliefs of the teacher. I consider that this professional knowledge is not only created, but also *socially constructed*, in and through practice, and that without professional dialogue many opportunities for learning are reduced or lost (Pollard 2002). Thus the further dimension of active intervention by an “expert teacher” to scaffold the development of professional knowledge in the novice is required.

From the beginning of the research process I have adhered to the model of teacher education which I have designated the “educationalist” model. This model regards teaching, and therefore the training of teachers, as an intellectual and reflective process rather than a purely technical one. While it is possible to reflect on one’s performance solely in terms of improving technical competence in delivering a largely prescribed curriculum, my own broader view of reflection includes the consideration of the ethical, social and political frameworks within which teaching operates. I wanted to know whether mentors would promote reflection on the teaching of literacy which moved beyond the improvement of performance within given parameters.

The role of the mentor as a scaffolder of students teachers’ learning and reflection is assumed to be central to the development of a reflective teacher in a partnership training arrangement. The previous chapter has considered the skills, qualities, knowledge and understanding that would appear to be necessary in order for primary teachers to fulfil this role effectively, and I have argued that not all primary teachers will automatically possess these qualities.

As a result, I have some reservations concerning the development of subject knowledge for teaching in the context of peripheral participation in communities of practice, as discussed by Edwards and Collison (1996) and Edwards & Protheroe (2003). I wonder whether successive Government initiatives have eroded teachers’ sense of ownership of curriculum content

and pedagogy to the extent that Lave and Wenger's (1991) concept may not longer apply.

My research investigation thus also seeks to identify features of mentoring practice which appear to encourage, or to impede, the development of reflective primary literacy practitioners, with a view to improving practice in school based training within the training partnership which is the focus of the study.

CHAPTER SIX

Methodological Approach

The epistemological approach adopted in the research study.

Guba and Lincoln (1994: 108) argue that the essential worldview of the researcher is a matter of belief, and that any paradigm is a human construction. If this view is accepted, it is important to acknowledge the beliefs of the researcher in respect of the ontological and epistemological foundations of their approach to research. The question of whether reality can be apprehended, and in what ways it can be represented, underpins the distinction between the quantitative and qualitative traditions in research, and leads to consideration of the relationship between the researcher and the subject of the research.

I have located myself within the interpretive tradition, because I share, with other researchers in this tradition, a view that locates both the researcher and the researched in particular time and space, in cultural and historical contexts. This is in contrast to the positivist worldview in which the ontological assumption is that the world can be apprehended as it really is: that there is an objective reality, and that this reality operates according to forms of rules or laws from which it becomes possible to generalise from the phenomena studied to the world at large.

The research investigation explores a number of layers, each interacting with others and capable of a range of interpretations, for example: Government policy for teacher training and curriculum practice in schools; the HEI's policy and practice in respect of the implementation of Government policy and of partnership with schools; mentors' views of teacher development and of subject knowledge; trainee teachers' views of subject knowledge and their own professional needs in training. The qualitative approach appreciates that such complexities of interpretation, values and attitudes cannot be examined effectively by research methods

that presume that explanations of behaviour can be attributed to quantifiable causal relationships

The interpretive view maintains that the observer brings her/his own preconceptions to the process of observation, thus rendering it a further interpretation of events, rather than an objective account (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994: 12). The researcher has an identity alongside those who are the focus of investigation and the values and cultural perspective of the researcher are acknowledged, rather than suppressed or ignored (Gadamer, 1975).

In Chapter One I positioned myself as an insider researcher, both by virtue of my role within the institutional frameworks of the training partnership, which is the focus of the investigation and by virtue of my beliefs and values in respect of ITET. Insider research “differs from other kinds of educational research in that it is carried out by the actors themselves” (Bassey, 1995:46). Although I am not actually a mentor, I am ‘inside’ the training partnership not merely in my role as an HEI tutor, but as someone who can, and does, directly and actively influence policy and practice in the operation of mentoring within the Partnership on both macro and micro levels.

If the observation and interpretation of events is socially situated, questions arise concerning causality and generalisability, both of which are cornerstones of the positivist research tradition. The interpretive approach does not reject cause and effect relationships, but neither does it elevate these into laws. The approach to causality common in the positivist tradition can appear deterministic; as failing to recognize the multi-faceted nature of social situations and, most importantly, as failing to recognize the perspective of the participants.

The social world therefore needs to be investigated in terms of meanings and actions, rather than causes and effects (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1989 1st edn: 24)

Thus, investigation within the interpretive tradition is less likely to begin from a hypothesis, which is investigated deductively. The positivist tradition designs research investigations to test hypotheses and the researcher within this paradigm may therefore only be looking for certain indicators. Qualitative approaches can operate within an inductive framework, offering the researcher the possibilities of re-framing research questions during the process of investigation and of developing theory, rather than testing it (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). There is an emphasis on natural language and unstructured observation from which meanings may be derived, rather than on the use of pre-formulated interview or observation schedules and questionnaires.

My methodological stance has shifted during the process of the research investigation, as outlined in the following chapter. Initially, the nature of the data available to me seemed to suggest a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches to the investigation. I later came to reject this, for the methodological reasons explained in Chapter Seven, but also because I became increasingly uneasy about the appropriateness of the methodological approach as a means of representing the views of the mentors who were the subjects of the investigation. This became an ethical as well as a methodological concern, in terms of my respect for the views of the mentors whose practice I was examining.

My reflections upon the research process have changed the investigation to some extent as it has progressed, as I will explain in the next chapter, but it has also been the case that my role within the Partnership has on at least one occasion limited the effectiveness of the research, as I will also acknowledge. The reflexive aspect of my research process shares some of the features of the action research tradition (Carr and Kemmis, 1986, Cohen and Manion, 1994, 4th edn). However, this was not the prime intention of the investigation, although I will reflect on this process in Chapters Eight and Twelve.

Case Study

I characterized my research approach as being that of a case study in Chapter One and have positioned myself within the interpretive tradition. There is broad agreement that case studies are studies of a phenomenon in a real life context using multiple sources of evidence (Cohen and Manion, 1994, 4th edn: 106, Bassey, 1999). The difficulties of separating the phenomenon under study from its context are recognized, and establishing the boundaries is an important element in the identification of the case under investigation (Stake, 1994:244)

Case studies evolve around the in-depth study of a single event or a series of linked cases over a defined period of time. The researcher tries to locate the 'story' of a certain aspect of social behaviour in a particular setting and the factors influencing the situation. (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995 2nd edn: 317).

The ways in which a case study is organised are affected by the issues that most concern the researcher. Stake (1994: 237) maintains that it is necessary to establish whether the study is *intrinsic* to the case, (that is, it is the uniqueness of the particular case which makes it worthy of study) or whether the case study is *instrumental*, in that it is used in order to aid understanding of a wider question. Instrumental case studies may also be *collective* studies where a number of cases are jointly studied in order to further understanding of the key issue.

Stenhouse (1985:50) identifies four approaches to case study: *ethnographic* studies based largely on participant observation; case study in *action research*; *evaluative* case studies and *educational* case studies concerned with "the understanding of educational action".

My own approach to case study is predominantly *instrumental*, in Stake's terms (Stake, 1994). I am interested in a question, rather than a particular instance or phenomenon. It could also be regarded as *collective*, in that the study is an investigation of a number of related cases all tending towards the investigation of the central question and bounded both within a specific time

frame and within a specific relationship: that of the training partnership operated by one HEI. The educational action underpinning my case study is, I believe, multi-dimensional. At one level I aim to provide a description of the case as an example of Stenhouse's *educational case study*, but since I represent my HEI and am personally instrumental in developing policy within the training partnership, the study also shares features with *action research* and *evaluative case study* approaches.

The case study approach and generalisability.

The case study approach has been criticised from within the interpretive research community for its emphasis on the particular. The grounds for criticism are that claims for the uniqueness of the case undermine any possibility of generalisation and theory building. (Atkinson and Delamont, 1985). However, a view of generalisability which might apply in the physical sciences: the idea that a cause will consistently produce the same effect, cannot be transferred to the social sciences so easily. As Donmeyer (2000:48) argues, the concerns of physical and social scientists are different.

Qualitative research is associated with a concern for meanings, rather than causes, and meanings are the product of social constructions, not external to them. The complexities of social situations militate against the possibility of identifying consistent cause and effect relationships between individuals and events without stereotyping. (Donmeyer, 2000: 51)

Such case studies provide for a different type of generalisation, such as one that draws on experiential knowledge, or "tacit" knowledge (Polanyi, 1958). Lincoln and Guba (2000) suggest that case studies are generalisable insofar as the situations described are transferable to other, similar situations. Schofield (1990), similarly, discusses the generalisability of case studies being related to their "fit" with situations in which others are interested. However, Donmeyer (2000) argues that the issue of similarity limits the concept of generalisation, and proposes that the language of schema theory, based on the work of Piaget, may offer a broader perspective, through recognising the case study as a source of vicarious experience through which other readers can assimilate information and accommodate it with

their own experience, leading to a more integrated and more finely differentiated cognitive structure.

Bassey (1999) has suggested that “fuzzy generalisations” which retain an element of uncertainty about cause and effect are appropriate propositional forms for case study research approaches, allowing a report to conclude with an empirical statement about the findings “ followed by a fuzzy generalisation – or proposition –which shows how the discovery *may* apply more widely” (Bassey, 1999:55). This view would seem to accord with Stake’s (1995:12) concept of “loosely determined assertion” and is the view that will be adopted in this research investigation, although it is hoped that readers will also be able to accommodate the findings with their own experience, as Donmeyer (2000) suggests and thus gain additional insight into the central issues considered by the study.

Validity and triangulation.

The validity of a case study is dependent on the extent to which the study captures the ‘reality’ of the case, although Bassey (1999: 75) suggests that validity is not a concept which can easily be applied to case study research and argues for a notion of “trustworthiness” based on the work of Lincoln and Guba (1985). The approach utilised in the majority of case studies to increase validity or trustworthiness is that of triangulation, where data is collected from a range of sources representing different points of view, and/or collected using a range of data collection methods.

Denzin (1984) proposes four forms of triangulation which could apply to case study research: data triangulation, where data is collected over a period of time from more than one location and from or about more than one person; investigator triangulation where more than one researcher/observer is involved in studying the same events; theory triangulation where observers approach the event from differing theoretical standpoints; and methodological triangulation where more than one method of data collection is used. The latter form of triangulation tends to be the most widely used. In addition to these forms of triangulation, “member checks” are also frequently part of the validating process in qualitative research, including

case studies. Member checking is the practice of sharing either the full record of an observation or interview with key actors, or sharing those extracts which will form part of the completed report, alongside the interpretation of the data and asking them if they accept this version of events as being an acceptable record.

My own case study involves methodological triangulation and data triangulation, since a range of data sources are examined, relating to a period of time and to events in a number of locations.

The evidence for my case study is drawn from:

- analysis of documentary materials, produced by mentors following the observation of English lessons, using a pro-forma devised primarily by the HEI;
- interviews with mentors, using a semi-structured approach, undertaken at two different points in time during the study;
- de-briefing conversations with students following observation of English lessons which have been tape recorded and analysed;
- a small number of group interviews with students, undertaken mainly at the end of their training process for ethical reasons.

There have also been ‘naturally occurring’ events during the period of the research investigation which have provided additional insights: these include ongoing evaluation of the students’ experiences in schools through the use of a questionnaire, and the incidence of an OfSTED inspection of the HEI’s Primary provision for training in English which took place during the time period of the research investigation. A mentor conference focusing on English was held as part of the preparations for the inspection and the results of a questionnaire given to mentors at the conference and a post-conference evaluation are also used to supporting the main evidence sources of the case study.

CHAPTER SEVEN

The evidence sources and methodological approaches used within the case study

The case study draws on three main evidence sources. This chapter discusses the methodological approaches used to obtain this evidence, and the strengths and possible limitations of each of the approaches adopted, including ethical implications. An overview of the research process is given in Fig. 7.3 on page 92 at the end of this chapter.

Documentary evidence.

The documentary evidence used in the case study has been that of extracts from lesson observation forms completed by mentors during or after observations of students' English lessons. These observations are recorded on a standard form provided by the HEI, which has a headed section, entitled "Subject Knowledge and Understanding" (Appendix Ai). Access to the documentary evidence did not present ethical difficulties because these written comments are in the public domain by virtue of being part of the formal record of evidence collected during a trainee's placement. In the dissertation, all extracts are anonymised to prevent the identification of individual mentors or student teachers.

These materials are not a reliable source of evidence as a complete record of all English or literacy lessons observed by mentors. There is no specific requirement by the HEI for formal observation of English lessons by mentors for student teachers at each stage of training, and these observations are sometimes undertaken by HEI tutors. HEI tutors' observation records have not been included within the documentary sample.

The HEI requests copies of observation records, as well as end of placement reports, for quality assurance purposes. However these are not always attached to reports, so that it is not possible to know whether all records of mentors' observations of English have been returned. During the

period during which the study took place two events occurred which increased the number of lesson observation forms returned to the HEI. From 2001/2 an arrangement was introduced whereby payment for mentoring students was not made to schools until report forms and other supporting evidence had been sent to the HEI, and an OfSTED inspection of the HEI with a focus on English, took place in the same year. These two factors resulted in a much higher return of observation forms in general, and of English observation forms for final year students in 2001/2, than had been the case previously. In 2002/3 the number of English observations of second year undergraduates remained high, on the basis of the forms returned, although there were fewer observation of English with final year (third year undergraduates).

In considering the evidence provided by documentary sources, it is important to acknowledge the original purpose of the observation record, and its intended audience(s) (Platt, 1981:53). Although the written form is sometimes regarded as a more reliable evidence source than the spoken word, this assumption is often misleading (Atkinson and Coffey, 1997:60, Scott and Usher, 1999: 122), and would certainly be so in the case of mentors' lesson observation records:

...different types of text have to be understood in the contexts of their conditions of production and reading (Hodder, 1994:394).

Written texts do not provide transparent access to meaning but are mutually constructed by both writer and reader (Barthes, 1975). This is particularly the case with the lesson observation forms, which often act as an accompaniment to mentoring conversations with students, following observed lessons. In the transcripts of mentor debriefing sessions, the HEI pro-forma observation form sometimes acts as a prompt to structure the conversation itself and sometimes lies alongside the conversation, shadowing, but not directly contributing to the content (see Appendix Eiii).

After the de-briefing session is completed, the written comments become the tangible record, subject to further interpretation by the student as reader. Both mentor-as-writer and student-as-reader bring their conceptions of

teaching and of the subject of English to bear on the conversation and the observation form. As other studies of mentoring conversations show, the teaching paradigms of mentor and student can be at odds with each other, (Dart and Drake, 1996, Arthur, Davison and Moss, 1999).

Additionally, there is the question of the “sincerity” of the writing (Scott, 1990: 22), a question that will also be considered in the examination of the transcripts of interviews and mentoring conversations. In order to assess whether what is written in a document is credible, the researcher has to consider whether the writer has been honest in their intentions, whether they believe what they have written and whether they are writing to create a particular effect on a reader. In the case of semi-public or official documents, where the writer has not actively chosen to record something but is required to do so by a given process, the question of sincerity may still apply. In this case the need to record for external scrutiny by HEI examiners or OfSTED inspectors, may not reflect mentors’ actual beliefs about what is important in supporting student teachers’ professional development.

It is thus important to consider for whom the mentor believes they are writing the lesson observation record. The structure of the language used often provides an indication of the intended audience, where a choice is made between the use of the second person or the third person. This ambivalence in the purpose of the observation records reflects one of the tensions in the mentor role itself: that of the tensions between the critical friend role and the externally accountable assessor role. Mentors may not be clear about their own authorial intentions (Scott and Usher, 1999:122). These factors will affect the sincerity and thus the reliability of the evidence gained from the lesson observation forms and need to be seen as part of the larger context in which the data will be interpreted.

Finally, these written records are unlikely to form a complete reflection of mentors’ responses and observations of trainees’ subject knowledge, as they are often used as a “short-hand” record, which is explored in more detail in the mentoring conversation following the observed lesson. Thus these

documentary sources are, at best, a partial record of mentors' views, and will need to be considered alongside other evidence. Indeed, in some circumstances, it would appear that what is written has very little relationship at all to the discussion held with the student. In evaluations of school experience, some students report that they receive their lesson observation records some time after the observed lesson, with little or no surrounding discussion (Appendix I). While it appears that such incidents are not widespread, these reports mean that the status of the document as a reflection of any discussion at all may be misleading.

However, although the above discussion indicates the limitations of considering the documentary evidence from mentors' written comments as an evidence source, there are also some advantages. The fact that the same pro-forma observation sheet has been used throughout the period under investigation, and the relatively large number of individual observation forms collected, provides opportunities for some comparisons to be made between different groupings in terms of academic years, stages of student training and age groups of pupils with whom student placements were undertaken. This amounts to a form of data triangulation, but is insufficient in itself to form a reliable evidence base. In particular, I believe that caution needs to be exercised in ascribing too much significance to a quantitative approach to this data, as the written notes are strongly situated in a changing literacy culture as a result of developing national policy.

In this respect, a mixed methodology is employed within the case study, but the limitations of the documentary data identified above are borne in mind throughout the discussion of the findings of the study, and are further considered in the section later in this chapter, which discusses the process of analysis of the data.

Semi structured interviewing

The limitations of the documentary evidence as a representation of mentors' views of subject knowledge in English meant that methodological triangulation would be important in increasing the reliability of the evidence base. In addition to scrutiny of mentors' written comments, a group of ten

mentors were interviewed early in the research process (Appendix Bi), in order to support the identification of themes concerning mentors' conceptions of subject knowledge.

A semi-structured interview approach was chosen as a research strategy because "it allows depth to be achieved by providing the opportunity on the part of the interviewer to probe and expand the respondent's responses" (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1989 1st. edn: 157). This enables more inductive analysis and theory building within the looser framework of the overall structure, whereas a structured interview approach is built around an existing hypothesis, which is being tested.

The first group of mentors was selected to ensure varying experience within the group (see Appendix Bi). Varying experience was sought in terms of length of experience as mentors and as classroom teachers, key stage experience, and involvement in Professional Development opportunities for mentors. The interview subjects were selected because I felt that random sampling or other types of probability sampling might not have provided this range of experience within such a small sample population.

The interview schedule (Appendix Bii) used in the first stage of the research was developed on the basis of my initial reading and on informal discussions with mentors about subject knowledge. It was trialed with two pilot interviews, which indicated that alternative phrasing of some questions might be needed for clarification, depending on the individual being interviewed. In practice the interviews did not always approach the key questions in the same order, although all questions were covered. Selected examples of transcripts from the first group of interviews are given in Appendix Biii, showing how themes were identified and later related to those emerging from the documentary evidence.

In the third year of the investigation a further group of five mentors were interviewed (Appendix Ci), using a different interview guide (Appendix Cii). While some of the questions used with the first interview group were

repeated, there was a stronger focus on mentors' beliefs about English as a subject and subject knowledge in English.

The mentor group involved in the second set of interviews was essentially self-selected. I wrote to a number of mentors on three occasions between May 2002 and May 2003 to ask if they would be willing to tape record their de-briefing conversations with student teachers, following the observation of English lessons. An example of the letter sent to mentors is given in Appendix Ei. Mentors were selected at random from a wide geographical spread of schools and the sample was checked to ensure representation of mentors working with students in different key stages and age groups.

As expected, not all mentors responded, and those who did so, and then carried out the tape recordings, were generally more experienced mentors or those who had been involved in other development activities with the HEI (see Appendix E iii). I then arranged to interview some of them at a later time, once the tape recording had taken place.

The structure of the second set of interviews was more fluid, focusing around fewer main questions. I also asked more secondary questions in order to elicit further responses when interviewees' replies seemed to justify this approach. Selected transcripts from the second group of interviews are given in Appendix Ciii.

A small number of group interviews with current and former students were undertaken during June 2003. Group interviewing was chosen for ethical reasons because I felt that student interviewees might feel more comfortable in group situations, and also because group interviews can assist with recall and elaboration of ideas (Fontana and Frey, 1994). Details of the students involved are given in Appendix Di, the key questions in Appendix Dii and extracts from the transcripts in Appendix Diii.

I was known to all the participants in the interviews with mentors, by virtue of my role within the HEI. While this may have meant that I did not need to establish rapport in the same ways that would have been necessary had we

been strangers to each other, it may have had other effects upon the interviews, in terms of the ‘sincerity’ of participants’ responses.

Both structured and semi-structured interview approaches can be criticised, on the basis that they do not take the relationship between interviewer and interviewee sufficiently into account, and can be presented as “context free” (Silverman, 1993, Miller and Glassner, 1997,). In selecting a semi-structured approach in order to gain some consistency in the subject matter explored within the interviews I needed to be extremely alert to the effect that this choice has upon the interviewees, particularly in view of my role in the HEI-school partnership. However, this latter influence would be just as strong within an structured interview setting, and possibly the more formal structure of a structured interview would have increased any tensions associated with my role within the partnership.

I considered that there were ethical reasons to operate group interviews with students, given my role in the HEI, as this strategy would minimise any possibility of an individual student feeling vulnerable or in any way pressurized through the interview process, particularly those still undertaking their training.

The majority of interviews were carried out in the participants’ school settings, or in other locations of the participant’s choice. All the interviews were tape recorded, and the consent of the participants was gained for this procedure prior to the tape being switched on. All participants were informed of the purpose of the research and that although the outcomes might inform my work with the HEI, I was not undertaking the research on behalf of the HEI or in any capacity which would involve directly reporting the outcomes to any public body. All participants were offered access to the transcripts of the tapes, and assured that they would be anonymised in any reporting of the research, and that they would be offered the opportunity to comment on any publications arising from the research investigation.

Taped conversations between mentors and students

As the documentary evidence did not necessarily represent all the discussion between mentors and student teachers concerning students' subject knowledge, it was important to obtain access to the verbal interactions between mentors and student teachers, concerning English lessons. As the model of primary mentoring operated by the HEI in the case study is one where the mentor is not normally also the class teacher, these interchanges were likely to take place following the observation of an English lesson taught by the student teacher.

Over a twelve-month period, fourteen tape recordings of mentoring conversations held between mentors and student teachers following the observation of English lessons were obtained (see Appendix Eiii). In the next chapter I explain why the decision to use taped conversations was taken, rather than to observe de-briefing conversations with student teachers which had been my original intention.

The tape recordings were obtained predominantly through written approaches to a sample of mentors (see Appendix Ei). The sample groups were selected randomly within certain categories, from those mentors working with second and third year (final placement) under-graduates, as described in the previous section of this chapter. No reference was made to the experience of the mentors, or to any other information held by the HEI in respect of the individual mentors who were identified through this process. It was hoped this process would counter any possible bias in the selection of mentors, and increase the validity of the investigation. In the event, all the mentors who responded had had previous personal contact with me in some capacity. This outcome will be discussed in the following chapter.

A selection of extracts from the tapes is provided in Appendix Eiv. In the text of this dissertation, all mentors and students have been anonymised. As with the transcripts of the interviews, all participants have access to the transcripts of the tapes, and they will be offered the opportunity to comment on any publications arising from the research investigation.

Some mentors and students clearly found the presence of the tape recorder intrusive. Some mentors who had originally agreed to participate in this aspect of the research contacted me to say that they had switched off the tape recorder as they felt it was interfering with their work with students, and others refused to participate at all on the grounds that it would be too stressful for the students involved. Students' consent to the tape recordings was obtained, and there were at least two instances of a mentor being willing to participate in the research, but whose student refused to be taped (see Appendix Eii). Questions as to how far these conversations are "natural" must therefore be considered, as well as how representative the set of taped conversations are, in terms of which mentors were willing and confident enough to offer to participate, who carried their offer through, and how far they can be said to be "typical" of mentors in general.

Mentor training courses and materials generally place considerable emphasis on the de-briefing conversation following observation as the occasion for mentor-student dialogue (Fish, 1995, Tomlinson, 1995) and the mentors working with the HEI in the case study have attended training sessions where this emphasis has been given. It is likely therefore, that even where mentors and students are inhibited by the presence of the tape recorder, the conversation will reflect a structure that the mentor believes to be good practice, precisely because it is being taped. I did not share the explicit focus of my research with the mentors prior to the tape recordings, and to this extent the conversations remain naturalistic. Even if the mentors and students have, consciously or unconsciously, edited their conversation in order to present what they feel is important in the de-briefing session, what they emphasised and what they did not is revealing.

The influence of the HEI on the evidence sources.

In addition to the possible constraints imposed on the interviews by my role within the HEI, the observation pro-forma provided by the HEI has clearly had a significant influence on how, and whether, mentors refer to students' subject knowledge in written records and verbal feedback. As discussed in Chapter Two, Higher Education has experienced interventions from

successive Government agencies into the structure of ITET and the strong emphasis on students' subject knowledge in Circular 4/98 (DfEE, 1998) is reflected in the structure of the pro-forma (Appendix Ai). In order to demonstrate to outside agencies that the HEI was implementing the requirements of Circular 4/98 primary mentors were asked to comment on students' subject knowledge for each lesson observation they undertook. The HEI had not asked mentors to do this previously.

As primary partnership manager at the time, I was influential in implementing changes to the lesson observation record forms. I led the discussions and re-design of the form, consulting with colleagues in the HEI and extensively with mentors in schools. I also wrote the Notes of Guidance for mentors which accompanied the new forms (Appendix Aii). These Notes of Guidance were influenced by my reading at the time, particularly by Shulman's distinction between content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman, 1995). Thus the forms in which mentors have been asked to express their concepts of subject knowledge in student teachers have been directly influenced by the actions of the HEI, in turn stimulated by Government policy.

Analysis of the data.

Only those sections of the lesson observation forms headed "Subject Knowledge and Understanding" have been examined. Similarly, although some of the tapes of mentoring conversations last for more than thirty minutes, the only sections of the conversation which have been closely examined are those where the mentor specifically focuses discussion on the student's subject knowledge. There are many other points in the conversations where discussion takes place about the subject content of the lessons in terms of curriculum delivery, but this is not the same as subject knowledge in the terms in which it has been discussed in earlier chapters. Thus the analysis has been restricted to those points in conversation and written notes where mentors articulate their understanding of the nature and significance of subject knowledge in English, rather than where the specific subject content of the lesson is referred to.

The methods of data analysis I employed were not identified in advance. This was partly because I revised my overall methodological and analytical approach during the first year of the investigation, but also because the process of reflecting on my data raised further questions, which required different methods of analysis.

I analysed the data obtained from interviews, mentors' written lesson observation records and the taped mentoring conversations through "coding" or categorising the concepts that emerged. This notion of coding was derived from the "grounded theory" approach (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, Strauss, 1987, Strauss and Corbin, 1990). There is a range of interpretations of the notion of "coding" but the most common definition is that of the cutting and pasting of excerpts from transcripts or notes with other items that fit under certain headings (Bryman and Burgess, 1994:218). At this stage, the coding approach has a strong relationship to content analysis where key words and phrases or their synonyms are identified and tabulated, in order to provide numerical data for statistical analysis, and initially I attempted to interpret my early findings on the basis of the coding groups displayed in tabular form (see Appendix F).

However, I became aware that this approach was distorting my interpretation of mentors' views; I discuss this more fully in the following chapter. I therefore revised my approach, reviewed the themes which were emerging from examination of both documentary sources and the first group of interviews, and annotated entire texts rather than use the cut and paste method, see Fig 7.1. Further examples of annotated texts are given in Appendices Biii and G.

At this early stage of the research, both post-graduate (PGCE) and undergraduate forms were examined in order to identify themes, although later a decision was taken to focus only on undergraduate students.

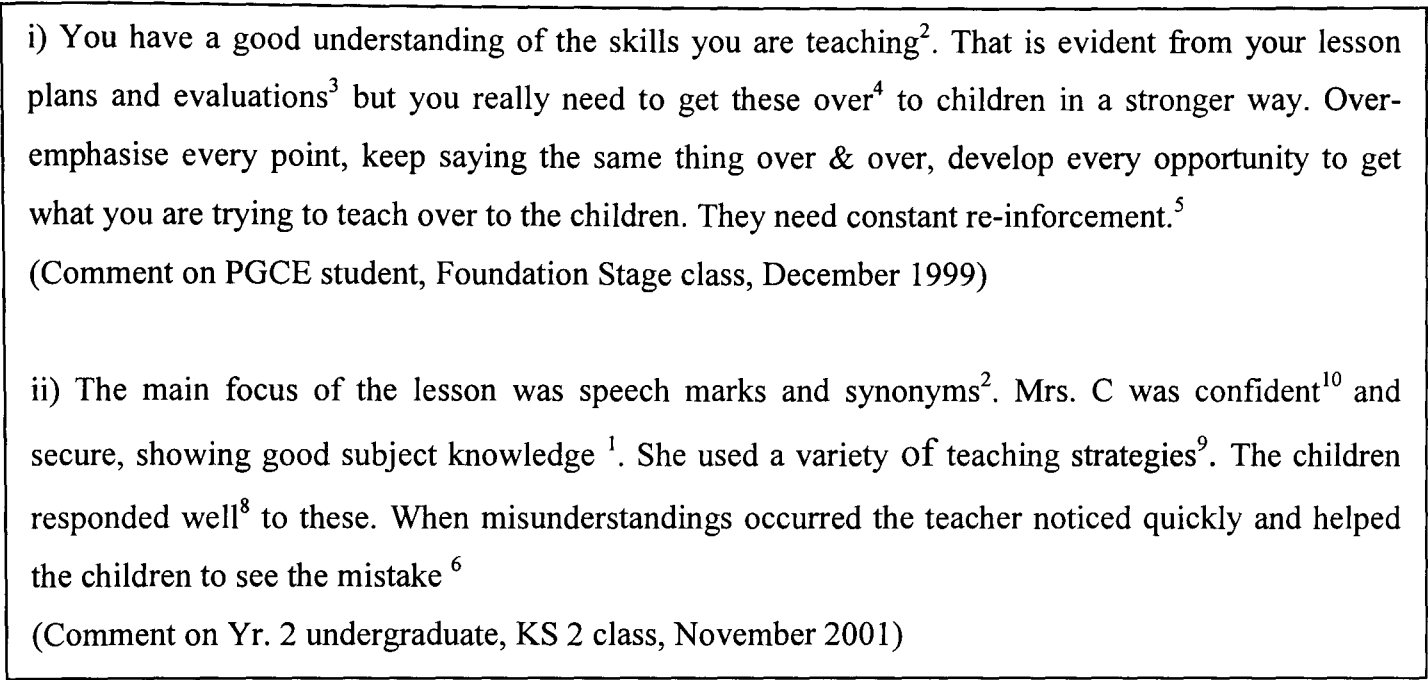


Fig 7.1 Examples of annotation of full text of mentor’s written comment.

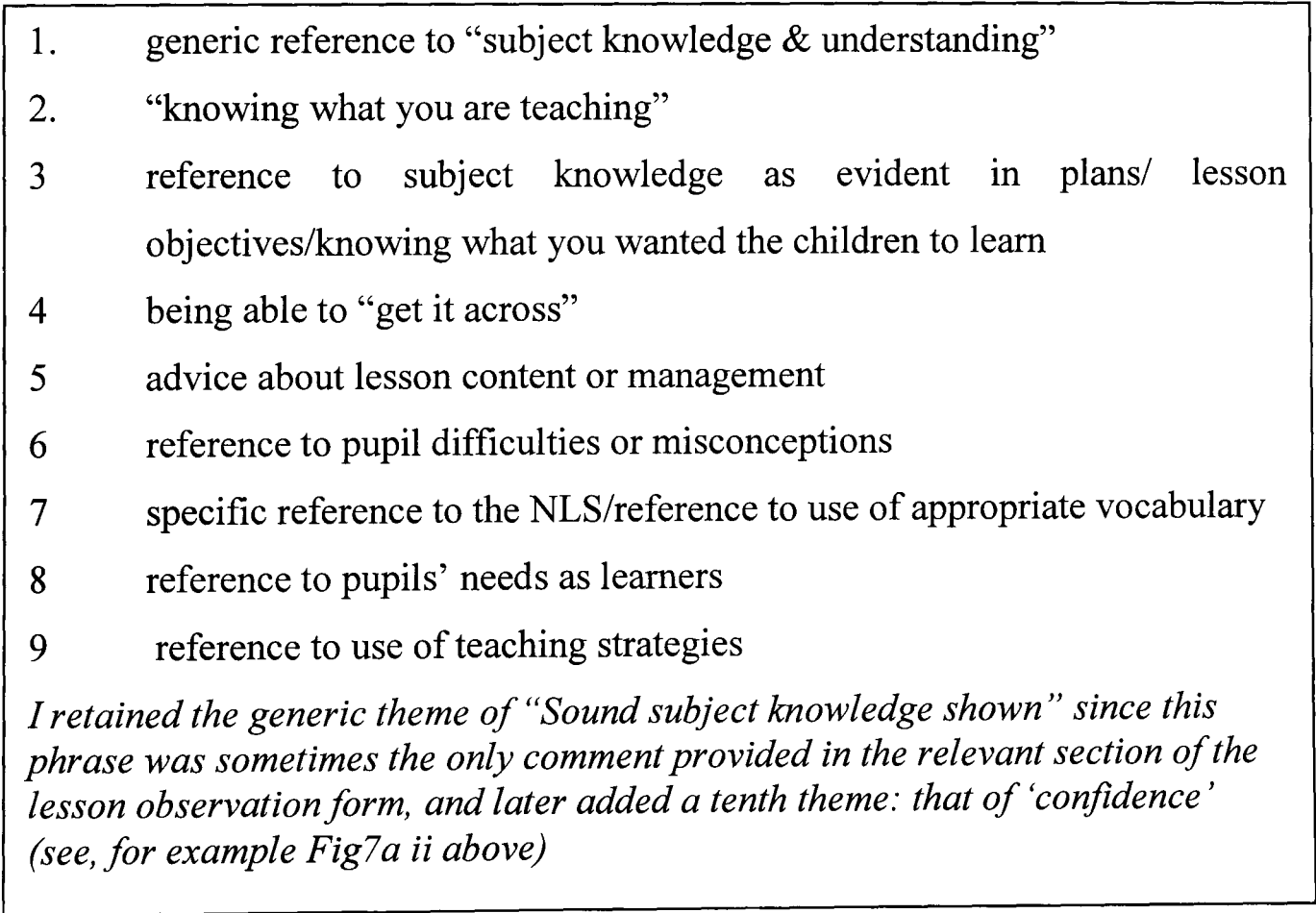


Fig 7.2 Themes identified from initial analysis.

The themes which emerged, and which have been applied to the data in the case study are given in Fig 7.2. By coding the full text, I felt I was representing the views of mentors more accurately and respecting the complexity of the relationships between different aspects of subject knowledge. However, this form of data analysis was not assisting me to

identify patterns that might exist or change over time, or to compare the views of different mentors. There might also be relationships between themes in the comments of individual mentors, and the possibility that such relationships might be common in groups of mentors.

These questions led me to consider the use of a matrix, to assist with fresh insights into the data (Miles and Huberman, 1994 p.239). Having firstly identified the occurrence of themes in an individual mentor's comment without reducing the text to separate and unrelated elements, a matrix would enable me to plot the various thematic components to ascertain whether patterns would occur within or between comments. An example of a matrix analysis is given in Appendix Hi.

The analysis of the combination of mentors' written comments on lesson observation forms, and the first set of interviews provided me with a thematic framework which enabled comparisons between different student groups to be made; both within the same academic year and between academic years. It also enabled me to examine themes that appear to occur more often in written comments, to determine whether or not frequency equals significance (Scott, 1990:32). It has been possible to produce simple block graphs based on a tally of the number of occurrences of each theme which show some variations in emphasis over time, between different stages of student training and between the age groups of pupils taught by students. (See Figs 11.1, 11.2 and Appendix Oi,ii,iii,iv)

When I reached this stage of the analysis process I decided to concentrate on students following the three-year undergraduate ITET programme only, in order to limit the amount of data obtained and to avoid any possible confusion which might arise through comparing work with student teachers on different ITET programmes. At a later stage, a comparative study might provide to be of interest however, and lesson observation forms for PGCE students have been collected, but not analysed for this research investigation.

I have now used the same set of themes and the matrix analysis method for all written comments on lesson observation forms over a three-year period, although these differ slightly for undergraduate year groups. My inappropriate attempt to code mentors' comments for 1999/2000 meant that I had not preserved some of the data in a form that has enabled consistent comparisons in all respects. The resultant graphs are shown and discussed in the following chapters, and the areas where direct comparisons cannot be made are clearly indicated.

It is important to acknowledge the reductive tendency of this more quantitative approach to data analysis. The graphs can only indicate broad trends in terms of differences between academic years or between students at different stages of training. As I have emphasised earlier, I have felt it to be extremely important to retain the sense of context when considering mentors' written comments and while the identification of the broad themes has been useful, it is the *level of detail within each theme* which provides a richer source of evidence for mentors' views about students' subject knowledge at different stages of training. A further examination of comments made on three of the broad themes has provided more insight into mentors' concepts of subject knowledge in relation to students' development in training, which will be discussed in later chapters.

Discourse analysis

My insight into aspects of the recorded mentoring conversations has also been enhanced by the techniques of conversation analysis and discourse analysis. As previously discussed, the interpretive paradigm requires the researcher to acknowledge the cultural contexts of text production and to recognise that texts are not "neutral". Similarly, talk interactions are culturally located and socially situated and the methods of conversation analysis and discourse analysis help to make these features of talk more explicit.

Analysis of discourse can examine the structures of conversations to show how social institutions are "talked into being" (Heritage, 1984:290). That is to say, that the structures of the talk have a recognisable function within the

setting. The patterns of institutional talk occur in informal speech situations from which they are derived, but they are “specialised, simplified, reduced or otherwise structurally adapted for institutional purposes” (Maynard and Clayman, 1991: 407). Institutional talk aligns participants to given roles: doctor/patient or teacher/pupil and there are recognizable speech sequences associated with different institutional contexts such as courtrooms and interviews.

The conversations recorded as part of the present case study fall into the category of institutional talk for a variety of reasons: ITT is itself an institutionalised phenomenon, with formal requirements for student assessment in practical teaching situations and a culture of “lesson debriefing” which was established well before the development of the current partnership model of training (Edwards and Protheroe, 2003). The mentor-student teacher relationship is now institutionalised, with the inherent power relationships expressed through the asymmetrical form of the discourse. Although the mentoring conversations were examined specifically in relation to reference to the student’s subject knowledge, these references were made within the context of the entire conversational structure (see Appendix N. The techniques of discourse analysis thus illuminated a significant aspect of student teacher-mentor interaction, and the implications of this will be discussed in a later chapter.

Date	Collection of lesson observation forms (documentary materials)	Interviews with mentors/ students	Taped conversations between mentors and student teachers following observation of lessons
May 1999 original research proposal accepted.			
November- December 1999	Year 2 students in schools PGCE students in schools	Pilot interviews undertaken	
January 2000: Research study interrupted due to bereavement			
April –June 2000 HEI OfSTED Inspection of Mathematics	Year 1 forms collected retrospectively. Year 3 (final year) students in schools PGCE students in schools <i>Early attempt at analysis of mentors' comments.</i>		
November- December 2000	Year 2 students in schools PGCE students in schools <i>(no further analysis of PGCE material after this point).</i>	Interviews with first mentor group	
January- February 2001	Year 1 students in schools <i>Revision of method of analysis</i>	Interviews with first mentor group contd.	
April 2001 Stage 1 Report			
April – June 2001	Year 3 (final year) students in schools Year 2 student evaluations of school experience		Initial attempts to observe mentoring conversations
November- December 2001	Year 2 students in schools		X conversations with Year 3 students taped
January- February 2002	Year 1 students in schools		
April 2002 : Mentor Conference	Questionnaire to mentors attending conference		
April –June 2002 HEI OfSTED Inspection of English	Year 3 (final year) students in schools Year 2 student evaluations of school experience		X conversations with Year 3 students taped.
October 2002	Postal evaluation of mentor conference – low response rate		
November- December 2002	Year 2 students in schools		X conversations with Year 3 students taped.
January – March 2003		Interviews with second mentor group, informed by analysis of data previously obtained.	
April – June 2003	Year 3 (final year) students in schools	Interviews with second mentor group continued. Group interviews with current & former students	X conversations with Year 3 students taped.

Fig 7.3 A summary of the research process

CHAPTER EIGHT

Examining the data: learning through the process.

The most striking feature of my experience of research ... is that it was a journey of discovery, and much of the time was spent at sea.
(Hammersley, 1984:62)

It is a not uncommon feature of qualitative methodology that the researcher re-visits the same data several times during the research process as each stage of the investigation generates new insights and further questions (Miles and Huberman, 1994). This has also been my experience, and my own journey as a researcher has become even more embedded in the development of the investigation than I had envisaged at the start.

Initial methodological and analytical approaches

Originally, I had intended to combine qualitative and quantitative approaches to data collection, following Bird (1992, Cited in Offprint Reader E835), using a series of semi-structured interviews with mentors to identify themes or key questions which could then be developed into a questionnaire for use on a larger scale within the training partnership. This in turn would inform further interviews and a “cycle” of movement between quantitative and qualitative approaches would develop. At the time I believed that the validity of the research would be increased by such an approach. To this end I piloted an interview schedule and then interviewed ten mentors as described in the previous chapter. (See Appendices Bi, Bii and Biii) The interview schedule was informed by literature and was focused on my initial research questions: see Fig. 8.1.

1. How do mentors currently (in 2000/01) define “subject knowledge” (in English)?
2. To what extent do their definitions distinguish between forms of “content knowledge” and “pedagogical content knowledge” (Shulman, 1995)?
3. How far are these definitions influenced by current educational initiatives?
4. What other influences might have affected their concepts of subject knowledge?
5. What evidence do mentors look for in identifying trainees’ subject knowledge, and where do they expect the evidence to be located (e.g. in trainees’ planning; in their classroom practice; in reflective writing or conversation etc)?
6. How significant (for mentors) is the notion of “subject knowledge” in terms of trainees’ overall development and as an element of assessment?
7. Do the behaviours of mentors in schools bear out accounts of their beliefs and actions?
8. To what extent do trainees perceive mentors as influencing the development of their subject knowledge?

Fig. 8.1 Initial research questions.

As I began to undertake the interviews and reflect on the process, however, I came to appreciate the subtlety and range of factors that were informing the opinions of the mentors I had interviewed. I realised that the possible variables that would need to be taken into account in a survey would be so diverse and numerous that meaningful correlations between factors would be likely to have a low incidence of statistical probability.

Additionally, I began to question my analytical approach to the documentary material. While undertaking the interviews I hoped that themes would emerge which would correspond with those arising from a scrutiny of mentors’ written comments on lesson observation forms completed after observations of student teachers’ English lessons. Thus I also looked for suitable strategies with which to analyse these comments.

As outlined in the previous chapter, I adopted an analytical strategy based on coding or categorising the concepts that emerged from interviews and mentors' written lesson observation records. I then recorded these comments in a tabular form, in order to ascertain the frequency of certain types of reference, such as explicit reference to the National Literacy Strategy. In the way I applied this approach, there was a strong relationship to content analysis where key words and phrases, or their synonyms, are identified and tabulated, in order to provide numerical data for statistical analysis.

Bryman and Burgess (1994) point out that some qualitative researchers feel uneasy about the "cut and paste" method because it removes the sections of texts from their natural context, and I feel that this is what I inadvertently did in my first attempt to analyse the data from lesson observation records. In order to undertake this process, it became necessary to separate out elements of mentor's comments, sometimes to the extent of separating parts of sentences, and it became clear that this approach was not fairly or accurately representing the views of the mentors themselves, which was central to my intentions. The reductive nature of this approach had led to certain themes gaining undue prominence without acknowledgement of the context in which they were made.

Retaining a sense of context would seem to be linked with a researcher's theoretical assumptions and not just something associated with certain data handling devices.

(Bryman and Burgess, 1994: 219).

I felt that my own attempts to develop coding in this way were reductionist. This led me to review the underlying paradigms of my research approach and to feel that my data analysis approach was running counter to the theoretical position I was coming to hold more strongly, which I have discussed in Chapter Six. Interpretive case studies aim to reflect the complexities of the phenomena under study, and seek to reflect the real life context of participants' actions. The form of 'content analysis' I had adopted appeared to me to be distorting this intention.

An example of the outcome of this “cut and paste method” is given in Appendix F, along with the conclusions I initially drew from using this method. As a result of the frequency with which the phrase “Sound subject knowledge shown” was used, I at first inferred that mentors did not have an articulated concept of subject knowledge. However, as Scott (1990) points out in discussing content analysis,

‘frequency’ is not the same as ‘significance’, and it is necessary for researchers to justify in each case why a frequency measure of significance is appropriate (Scott, 1990:32).

I realised that I had considered this phrase purely on the basis of numerical occurrence and not in terms of its relationship to other comments made by mentors and I began to question the validity of the conclusions I was drawing as a result.

I then sought a revised approach to analysis of mentors’ written comments on lesson observation forms in order to identify themes and patterns that underlie the texts as a whole, rather than attempting to identify elements on the basis of a fragmented reading. Appendix G provides examples to show how the themes were identified, along with my reflections on the evidence at that stage of the research. I finally adopted the technique of annotating the text of mentors’ comments with numerical references to the original themes and felt I was representing the views of mentors more accurately and respecting the complexity of the relationships between different aspects of subject knowledge (see Fig 7.1).

Revising the analysis of documentary materials.

A re-analysis of the data obtained from written lesson observation records identified themes that were then linked to the initial research questions (see Fig. 7.2 and Appendix G). Many of these themes also occurred in the interviews, although not all, and the interviews provided additional information on research questions which could not be fully investigated through the written data. Extracts from the first set of interviews are given in Appendix Biii.

As explained in Chapter Seven, I developed a matrix (see Appendix Hi) to record the incidence of themes, because I wanted to see if there were any patterns of emphasis in relation to the key stage being taught by the student (other than obvious relationships in relation to references to specific curriculum documents), or whether there might be correlation between different themes. These findings are discussed in the following chapters. However, the development of the matrix format revealed further challenges in terms of the thematic analysis, and I returned yet again to the original data in order to clarify my thinking. Some of my reflections on this process are given in Appendix Hii.

In some cases, transferring the themes to the matrix showed that certain themes were rather too broad and contained more specific examples of mentors' views about English subject knowledge than were conveyed by the generic theme heading. This was particularly true in relation to Theme Two, "*knowing what you are teaching*", Theme Five "*advice*" and Theme Nine "*teaching strategies*". Re-analysis of the data for Theme Two, previously identified as "*knowing what you are teaching*" (content knowledge) showed that mentors were providing more examples of content knowledge than I had realised at the beginning of the investigation. Approximately 25% of mentors, in both academic years for which I had records at this point, provided an indication of the content knowledge related to the observed lesson. Comments placed under Themes Two, Five and Nine were subsequently examined further.

In the case of Theme Three: *knowing what you wanted the children to learn*, Theme Four: *being able to "get it across"*, and Theme Six: *reference to pupil difficulties or misconceptions*, I began to appreciate some possible ambiguities in mentors' written comments. These could not be clarified without access to the mentoring conversations of which these comments were but a partial record. These ambiguities are discussed further in the following chapters. There has thus been some clustering or overlapping of the themes identified in Fig. 7.2, which is shown in Fig. 9.1.

I became increasingly uneasy about my coding of Theme One: “*generic reference to subject knowledge and understanding*” as the process of analysis continued. I had misinterpreted the significance of this phrase at an earlier stage of the process and began to feel that identifying a “generic reference to subject knowledge & understanding” as a separate theme might only be relevant if there were no further amplification given in the written comment. The use of the matrix continued to create a false impression of the significance of this type of comment when analysed as a separate theme in all occurrences. However, the matrix did provide an opportunity to determine how often such comments are written without further amplification, which the previous use of cut and paste analysis had not done. (See Appendix J)

Other than my reservations about Theme One, re-analysis using the matrix approach seemed, at the time, to represent mentors’ views appropriately and I have therefore continued to use this in the analysis of all subsequent documentary data derived from the lesson observation forms. I have further examined Themes Two, Five and Nine to look for patterns or sub themes and the results of this further analysis are discussed in later chapters.

I have not involved any other researchers in the process of coding or categorising the data to ascertain “procedural accuracy” (Miles & Huberman 1994: 242). This would be a significant omission if my argument were based upon a quantitative approach, such as content analysis. In acknowledging the ambiguity of some of the data, and in cross-referring between themes, I have attempted to counter the dangers of misattribution of data to categories, of which I was guilty at an earlier stage in the process. The substantial exercise of re-examination of the original data, following the development of the matrix could also be seen as a further check on the consistency of the categorisation.

It is also the case that different aspects of subject knowledge appear to have been foregrounded for mentors at different times during the investigation. It is crucial to remember that the mentors were not working with their students

in a vacuum. Had I adopted a more fixed analytical approach, these issues of the inter-related layers of meaning might have been far less obvious.

The other questions that I hoped the analysis of the lesson observations forms would illuminate concerned possible patterns of emphasis (or frequency) in themes reflecting the different stages of student training; the period of time in which reports were written, and the age group of pupils taught by the student. The results of these analyses are given in the following chapters. I also wanted to see if certain themes appeared more frequently in juxtaposition with each other. However, the matrix system has produced little evidence of patterns of relationship between themes on a sufficiently consistent basis for me to feel they are significant.

The data obtained from the observation forms was seductive, in terms of the amount of information I had available. It has been important for me to remind myself constantly of its partial nature as an indication of mentors' views, and thus of its reliability, as discussed in the previous chapter.

Gaining access to mentors' interactions with students.

I firstly attempted to gain this insight by arranging to observe de-briefing conversations between mentors and student teachers, but after three attempts with varying success I decided to pursue an alternative approach.

The first difficulty was that of ensuring I was actually present at the right time: mentors cannot always de-brief students immediately after an observed lesson and cannot always say exactly when their meeting will take place. I felt that the need to wait until I was present, or to rush the session because I was present, placed a constraint upon both student and mentor which militated against a genuinely naturalistic approach to this aspect of the research. My own timetable and commitments prevented me from being able to spend long periods of time in a school so that I could be present when the right opportunity occurred and the de-briefing interview could take place in a more spontaneous manner.

The second difficulty concerned the mentor's desire to involve me in the process, either as an observer of the preceding lesson and/or as a participant in the de-briefing conversation. Even where I was not directly invited to contribute to discussion, non-verbal signals such as lifted eyebrows and eye contact meant that I was not a "neutral" observer. When I positioned myself out of direct line of sight I was also unable to observe the non-verbal interaction between mentor and student, but still felt I was an obtrusive presence.

For these reasons I decided that that tape recording the conversations would lessen these difficulties and be less intrusive. There are the obvious disadvantages to tape recording in that non-verbal cues to meaning are lost, but I would be able to use the tape recording as an aid to any interviews subsequently conducted with the mentors. Examination of the content of mentoring conversations was not my only data source and I felt that the loss of the non-verbal dimension was compensated for by a likely increase in natural discourse between mentor and student, which could be triangulated with both the written lesson observation report and the interviews held with the participants. I was also aware that taped mentoring conversations had been used as the evidence of other research by Haggerty (1995), Edwards & Collison (1996) and Edwards and Ogden (1998) so I would have a basis for comparison with my own material.

As described in Chapter Seven, I wrote to a number of mentors at different times over a year, asking them if they were willing to tape record their conversations with students. The letters were sent to different groups of mentors each time, roughly representing a 20% sample of the schools involved in different student placements.

However, all the positive responses came from those mentors with whom I had previously had direct personal contact. The context of this contact varied from involvement in OfSTED inspections in previous years (not necessarily during the period of the research investigation) to membership of partnership committees. It seemed to be the case that their willingness to be involved in the research was based on their relationship with me as a

person. Mentors who encountered me only through formal communications from the HEI were much less willing to participate in the research investigation.

This result made me appreciate more vividly how vulnerable primary mentors feel about their role and interactions with student teachers. Those mentors who agreed to tape-record their conversations (and who remembered to do it!) were exposing their practice. When considering the tapes as evidence I have needed to be aware of the possibilities that the tapes, just as much as the written lesson observation records, are presenting an edited or public version of events, shaped by views of what the participants felt I wanted to hear, or what they wished to present as a 'good mentoring conversation'. This possibility has been under-scored by comments from some mentors in giving me their tapes, such as "I hope it's what you want" or "I don't know if I got it right". These participants trusted me sufficiently to share their practice with me, but also placed me in an expert role, as someone who would know 'good' mentoring when I heard it.

Comments such as these have reminded me again of the ambivalence of my role as researcher and as senior colleague within the Partnership structure. I have been struck by the implied anxieties of very experienced primary practitioners in terms of the quality of their work with student teachers and reminded of the need for professional respect for colleagues in undertaking interpretations of their actions.

Obtaining evidence from taped conversations and interviews.

My own role within the partnership influenced both the conduct of the interviews and also the constituents of the group of mentors who agreed to tape record mentoring conversations and participate in the second round of interviews.

As I described in the previous chapter, the first interview group was deliberately selected to represent a range of age and experience. I had intended that the second group would be more random, and approached a large number of mentors with this intention, but as I have explained, this did

not occur. In retrospect I could have deleted all mentors whom I felt I knew quite well from the random sample groups. However, given the low response rate from mentors who knew me less well, this might have resulted in my not being able to obtain sufficient taped evidence to support the investigation.

I was therefore previously, personally known to all the mentors who were interviewed. As I have acknowledged, this enabled a good rapport to be established but there may have been a danger that I could ‘lead’ the responses, or that the participants thought I wanted particular answers, by virtue of my role. Mike, for example (see Appendix Biii. 3) appeared to believe this:

Mike: We’re talking about the sound of ‘p’ so we use words such as digraphs and phonemes and all these things, so perhaps you’re skilfully leading me to think about that – that’s subject knowledge – the vocabulary

Interviewer: No it’s a genuine question – it’s a vexed issue.

(Interview with mentor Mike, December 2000)

My response to Mike here could be regarded as inappropriate, depending on how this exchange is interpreted. My reply is intended to reassure him that my question is open, that I am not looking for the ‘right’ answer. However, it could also be interpreted as a leading response, since instead of accepting his suggestion about subject knowledge, I implicitly challenge it. The additional comment “It’s a vexed issue” offers my personal opinion, which was perhaps unnecessary, but does enable Mike to continue to reflect on the original question and after some hesitation, to expand his original response.

It is worth noting that in assuming that I might be “skilfully leading him” towards a particular answer, Mike is investing me with the attributes of the experienced teacher who supports pupils’ higher order thinking through the use of open questioning techniques. Again, there is an assumption of my expert status which may underpin all the interviews to a greater or lesser extent. I listened carefully to the interviews a number of times, in order to

identify places where my questions or responses may have influenced the participant's replies. Although I do not consider this occurs on many occasions, I have removed those sections of the interviews from my transcripts and they are not included in the evidence base for the research.

Other events taking place during the period of the investigation.

The development of the themes and subsequent sub-analysis also informed other aspects of the investigation. During the second year of the investigation, my HEI was inspected by Ofsted with a focus on the teaching of English and I used some of the results of my research to inform a questionnaire I administered at a mentor conference concerned with the inspection.

The questionnaire was given to mentors to complete and return at the Conference (see Appendix Ki). Respondents were asked to indicate how often they felt they commented on given aspects of subject knowledge, using a four point scale ranging from "often" to "never". The questions were derived from the analysis of mentors' written lesson observation forms, particularly that of Theme Two "*knowing what you are teaching*" or 'content knowledge' and Theme Nine "*teaching strategies*". I also drew on the literature on mentoring and subject knowledge.

The results of the questionnaire corresponded quite closely to results from the thematic analysis using the matrix and graphs and at first I felt that I had obtained some useful triangulation evidence. On reflection, however, I am less sure of the reliability of this correspondence since the questionnaire was based closely on the results of the matrix analysis in the first place and respondents were not offered further options. The investigative process was thus probably self-referential and could have reinforced the views of subject knowledge emerging from the analysis of written comments, rather than challenged them or provided alternatives. The first question is also ambiguous, since although I ask if mentors feel it is important to comment on the structure of the Literacy Hour, the examples I give could be interpreted as examples of teaching strategies, not as elements of the Literacy Hour "clock".

Attempting to combine issues related to my research investigation with matters pertaining to meeting the requirements of the inspection process did not result in the generation of reliable data and in this instance, my insider status was a barrier to the research process. The results obtained from the questionnaire are referred to in the following chapters, but with reservations about the validity of the data.

This questionnaire was followed up by a further postal survey of those mentors who had attended the Conference, which combined an evaluation of the Conference with a separate, and clearly indicated, section relating to my own investigation (see Appendix Li). The questionnaire was pre-tested for clarity and to avoid ambiguity. This was a postal survey with a 20% return rate, which is quite low. Possibly some mentors did not return the questionnaire unless they were engaged in working with students at the time, since one question in the Conference evaluation section asked them to gauge the effect of the Conference on their future practice with students other than on final placement.

The low return makes generalisation difficult, but the responses cast an interesting side-light on mentors' views about English as a subject, which appear to be eclectic. The first group of questions were based on key words related to aspects of the Cox models, although as with the research of Goodwyn and Findlay (1999) there may be some confusion over aspects of the Cox models. As with the responses of the secondary English teachers in the results of Goodwyn and Findlay's (1999) questionnaire, the majority of respondents gave a fairly high profile to all statements (see Appendix Lii) despite the fact that they represent differing views on the nature of English as a subject. This is an interesting comparison, which could be pursued in further research.

Student evaluations

A further incidental source of information has been student evaluations of their experience in schools. As the Partnership Manager, monitoring the Quality Assurance aspects of school experience is part of my responsibility.

Each year, students are asked to complete a questionnaire concerning various elements of their experience in schools, including information about the nature of the feedback they receive from mentors.

Extracts from these evaluations are given in Appendix I. As the students have not been informed that their responses are to be used as part of my research investigation, there are ethical considerations. Thus this information has been used only as supplementary material in the dissertation and not as a main source of evidence.

Ethical considerations

Throughout the investigation I have attempted to respect the ethical codes applied to qualitative research procedures, based on the guidelines provided by the British Educational Research Association (1992 and updated 2003).

I have indicated where these were applied in the case of each of the evidence sources, in Chapter Seven and in this chapter.

In view of the potential vulnerability of students currently on programmes of training in my HEI I also aimed to interview students at points in their training when their school experience assessment had been completed. In this way no advantage or disadvantage could apply to their participation in the research.

In the presentation of my findings in the following chapters, I have responsibilities both towards the profession and towards the participants in my research. It will be important that claims concerning mentors' beliefs or actions, and explanations for these, are based on evidence. However, evaluation of these beliefs or actions in terms of their impact on the professional learning of student teachers should not be seen as critical or disrespectful of individual participants in the research.

Recommendations for further consideration.

This chapter is sub-titled "Learning through the process" and there are a number of features of the methodology and data analysis which I would now improve, some of which have been touched upon in this chapter.

I came to appreciate the benefits of group interviewing too late in the research process and now feel that I could have attempted to use group interviews with mentors as well as with students. Although there might have been difficulties in arranging for the group to meet and finding a suitable location, some of the tensions inherent in my own role in the Partnership might have been reduced, and the dynamic of the group might have supported participants in developing their own responses further.

A closer correlation between the mentors involved in the taped conversations and those interviewed, over the research investigation as a whole, would have enabled individual case studies to be undertaken. The lack of close correlation in the present investigation results from my change of plan from the original intention of observing mentoring conversations, rather than using tape recordings. The advantage of the range of tapes and interview data is that a broader evidence base has been obtained, in that more individual mentors have been involved in the study.

On the other hand, there has been less opportunity to show how far individual mentors' beliefs about English as a subject, and subject knowledge in English, are reflected in their work with students as demonstrated in the taped conversations. This is an approach I may consider taking in future investigations, although it might not have been the most suitable approach to investigate some of the questions I was asking in this study.

In terms of the data analysis, over the period of time I have been using the matrix format, I have become increasingly conscious of these "multi-category" possibilities of many mentor comments. For example, should advice on the positioning of pupils so they can see the enlarged text be categorised as Theme Five – advice; or Theme Nine – teaching strategies? As I show in Chapters Nine and Ten, there have also been shifts in mentors' concepts of subject knowledge, as evidenced in the written comments, influenced by national developments in the NLS. Thus the implicit meanings of the language in the written comments are highly situated, and I

have become increasingly aware that any form of coding or thematic analysis might not represent these multi-layered concepts adequately. I have attempted to make these layers explicit in the following chapters, but am aware that the use of visual summaries such as graphs could be misleading.

The research investigation has been cyclical (see Fig. 7.3) so that the data analysis process of the written comments has occurred at several points during the investigation. The advantage of this approach has been the opportunity it has presented to re-engage with the themes over a period of time, and to reflect on my underlying methodological approach, as discussed above. However I undertook interviews with mentors at the beginning and end of the investigation. This was not as I had originally intended, but resulted from unavoidable changes to my work situation. The disadvantage has been that this resulted in the identification of some themes on the basis of interviews with the first group of mentors which have not emerged strongly in the written comments which were obtained in later years, but which have remained on the matrix and appear on the graphs in Appendices Oi., Oii., Oiii. And Oiv. Figs 11.1 and 11.2. Again, these could be misleading in terms of their significance, or apparent lack of significance.

Questions the research investigation did not answer

The significant perspective that is largely absent from this study, is that of the student voice. My intentions have always been to focus my investigation primarily on the views of mentors, but this does not mean that I am unaware of the role student teachers play in their own professional development. The last of my initial questions:

To what extent do trainees perceive mentors as influencing the development of their subject knowledge?

has not been as fully addressed within the case study as I had hoped. There are both practical and methodological reasons for this.

As the research investigation progressed, I realised that this question was far from straightforward. I would have needed to investigate student teachers' concepts of subject knowledge, their beliefs about the subject of English and

their conceptions of what it means to develop as a teacher. In other words, I would have needed to parallel my investigation of mentors' views.

However, in the case of final year students whom I had hoped to interview, it proved impossible to arrange for interviews as the end of their placement and the end of their programme were virtually concurrent and their time in the HEI was fully accounted for. A small number of students remain at the HEI for a further year to undertake an advanced subject study course and these were the subjects of some group interviews.

The research process has also enabled me, sometimes painfully, to acknowledge the limitations of aspects of my own work with the training partnership as well as with my methodological approach at various points during the investigation. In this respect the investigation has operated as the starting point for an action research project which will be discussed in the concluding chapter.

CHAPTER NINE

Outcomes of the investigation:

Conceptualising Subject Knowledge in English

Introduction.

The research investigation initially set out to explore primary school mentors' developing concepts of subject knowledge. The investigation concentrated on the subject area of English because of its central place in the primary school curriculum, and because the introduction of the NLS and the ITT NC gave a further impetus for examining the impact of this large-scale curriculum innovation on teachers' thinking about subject knowledge.

As described in the previous chapters, ten themes were developed through analysis of written comments and interviews with the first group of mentors, (Fig 7.2). During the process of identifying appropriate themes it became evident that there were relationships between some of the comments made by mentors, and the forms of subject knowledge discussed by Shulman (1995) and Turner-Bissett (1999). These relationships are explored in the following section.

The research investigation took place during a period in which teachers, and student teachers, were adjusting to the requirements of the NLS and ITT NC. Changes which have taken place in mentors' written comments over the period of the investigation are considered later in this chapter.

The significance of subject knowledge for primary student teachers.

Prior to the introduction of the requirement by the HEI for mentors to comment on student teachers' subject knowledge, few mentors could remember considering this aspect of teaching.

I tended to fill the boxes in as presented to me. I just dealt with what was there (prior to the introduction of the revised lesson observation form – Interview with mentor Sandra: March 2001)

I think it probably is the form...It has made me more specific because as I said it makes me relate back to the objective.

(Interview with mentor Jane: November 2000).

This is consistent with the findings of Furlong and Maynard (1995), Maynard (1996), Edwards and Collison (1996) and Edwards and Ogden (1998), which indicate a low priority for subject knowledge in conversations between mentors and student teachers.

In the fourteen taped mentoring conversations, subject knowledge is explicitly mentioned only where mentors are using the HEI pro-forma to structure the conversation (see Appendix Eiii). It is also noticeable that three of the most detailed conversations about subject knowledge took place with students during the period of the HEI OfSTED inspection. In the following year, there was little explicit reference to subject knowledge in mentoring conversations, and there were a larger number of Theme One “*sound subject knowledge shown*”, comments for final year students with no further amplification (see Appendix J).

Current and former students who were interviewed could recall little discussion about their subject knowledge with their mentors. What little they could remember, appeared to correspond to the concept of content knowledge, expressed as “knowing what you are teaching”.

Generally they just sort of said, “Oh your knowledge seems sound, you knew what you were doing” (Former student interviewed June 2003)

They just checked that you were doing it right and you were on the right lines. I haven't really discussed it with anyone. (Former student interviewed June 2003)

This taken-for-granted attitude to subject knowledge as experienced by the students is also supported by evidence from the tape-recorded mentoring conversations:

Obviously your subject knowledge was good⁶, of both the Foundation Stage and the National Curriculum⁷ and, again, the objectives³ were well linked together and the use of ICT was clearly planned for and reinforced the reading skills, which was very good. (Mentor Ann with 3rd (final) year undergraduate in R/I class, June 2002 –full comment).

As in the research of Burgess and Butcher (1999), mentors in interviews tended to be more able to provide examples of subject knowledge, and to emphasise its importance, in terms of its absence:

It takes a long time you know to become familiar with these things um and also the subject specific vocabulary. I had a student come to be last year and say what are these smilies (laugh) and it was similes and he had no idea what they were (laugh) so er yes the sort of specific vocabulary that's attached to English as well. (Interview with mentor Hazel, June 2003).

However, of the 68 complete responses to the Conference questionnaire (Appendix Kii), only 34 mentors said they were more likely to comment on aspects of subject knowledge if they were weak rather than if they were strong. This equal division between acknowledging strengths and weaknesses appears to mark a shift towards a higher profile for subject knowledge in mentors' perceptions, as opposed to the "deficit model" identified by Burgess and Butcher (1999).

The evidence suggests that mentors are likely to identify evidence of subject knowledge, and to discuss this with students, only if required to do so by the HEI. Their pre-occupations within the taped conversations appear to focus on the detail of the observed lesson, largely in terms of the student's success in enabling the lesson objectives to be achieved, although these conversations have not been fully analysed in detail, as this was beyond the scope of the present investigation.

However, an examination of the written comments on lesson observation forms indicates that the mentors in the case study implicitly hold more complex views of subject knowledge for teaching than one solely concerned with content or subject-matter knowledge. These views also emerged in the interviews, although it is possible that in some cases they were articulated only in response to the interview questions.

An examination of the significant themes emerging from documentary evidence and interviews.

Incidences of Theme One “*sound subject knowledge shown*” are not regarded as significant unless they occur with no further amplification, as discussed above (see Appendix J).

Theme Two, “*knowing what you are teaching*” corresponds to underpinning knowledge, held at an adult level, broadly equivalent to Shulman’s concept of “content knowledge” (Shulman, 1995: 129). There have been a consistently high number of references to this theme throughout the period of the study in written comments, and in interviews with both groups of mentors. These reflect the ‘common-sense’ belief that strong subject matter knowledge is needed in order to be able to teach in primary school settings as well as in secondary schools (Poulson, 2001: 40). This emphasis on teacher knowledge is embedded within the NLS *Framework*, and the ITT NC, discussed in Chapters Three and Four.

In interviews, as well as in the written evidence subject matter knowledge was frequently characterised in terms of technical vocabulary.

I have become almost obsessive about vocabulary² because I think it says so much about subject knowledge (Interview with mentor Keith December, 2002).

Be careful to use the correct terminology²: = phoneme instead of letter; sl = a consonant cluster (Lesson observation comment, Year I undergraduate, KSI class, January 2002).

You might like to use the 'proper' terms² as well as the common ones e.g adjectives and describing words. (Lesson observation comment, Year I undergraduate, KS I class, January 2002).

Knowledge of texts, or of how children develop in terms of literacy skills was rarely mentioned, despite the fact that mentors had given a relatively high score to knowledge of child development in literacy on the conference questionnaire (see Appendix Kii).

Comments allocated to this theme are those that include specific reference to lesson content, or to researching the lesson content in some way. There have been changes within this theme over the period of the investigation that will be discussed later in this chapter.

"Knowing what you wanted the children to learn" (Theme Three) is a theme which emerged in written lesson observation records, sometimes expressed in terms of having clear plans or lesson objectives, for example in Ann's comment quoted earlier on page 111. Several of the mentors interviewed identified the student's lesson objectives as one of their main sources of evidence for subject knowledge.

.... I would look at the aims of the lesson³ and where the aim of the lesson... was she going about her aims in the appropriate (way)? She was teaching life processes of the plant. Does she know the life processes of the plant? Does she actually know what it is she is trying to teach² the children? That's basically it. Does she actually know what it is that she's doing? (Interview with mentor Kay, February 2001)

It makes me relate back to the objective³ and actually what they're teaching and whether they know about what they're teaching² themselves. Why they're actually teaching it. (Interview with mentor Jane November, 2000)

This clarity in terms of intended learning outcomes for pupils can be seen both as an element of pedagogical content knowledge and also as an aspect

of curricular knowledge; “ the full range of programmes designed for the teaching of particular subjects and topics at a given level” (Shulman, 1995:131).

You obviously knew what you wanted the children to learn³ and expressed yourself clearly⁴ (Lesson observation comment, Year 2 undergraduate, KS 2 class, December 2000).

Although this theme appeared to be significant at first, it became increasingly difficult to distinguish whether the mentor intended to comment upon the student’s personal ownership of the lesson objectives or the student’s “knowledge” of the objectives laid down by the NLS, for example:

The objective of the lesson³ was clearly communicated to the class⁴. Use all opportunities to reinforce learning such as repeating words you have written up on the board. (Lesson observation comment Year 2 undergraduate, KSI class, November 2002,).

There thus remains some confusion in allocating comments to Theme Three or Theme Seven on the matrix. The matrix analysis (Appendix Hi) and resulting graphs (Appendices Oi – Oiv.) indicate a relatively low number of comments that can be securely attributed to this theme. Fig. 9.1 demonstrates this area of ambiguity, which was referred to in the previous chapter.

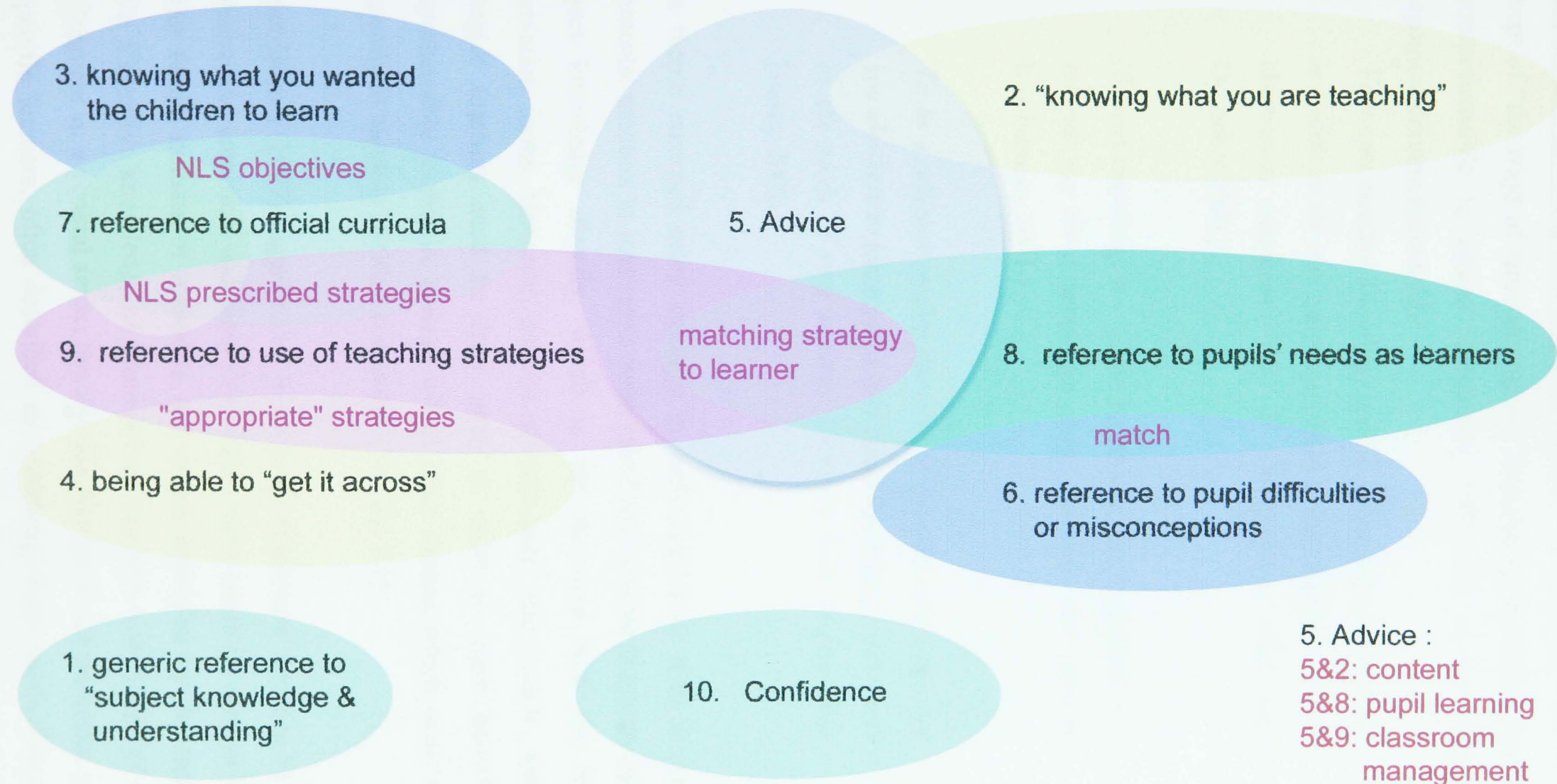


Fig. 9.1. Diagram showing relationships between the ten themes originally identified.

Theme Four, “Knowing how to put it across,” corresponds to Shulman’s concept of “the ways of representing and formulating the subject that make it comprehensible to others” (Shulman, 1995:130) as an element of pedagogical content knowledge:

Your own excellent knowledge and understanding of the subject is evident in the way you put it across to the children⁴. (Lesson observation comment, Year 2 undergraduate, KS2 class December 2000.)

(Subject knowledge is...) How to get it across to children⁴ in a relevant way for a certain age group. (Interview with Mentor Roz February 2001.)

To be a reflective teacher you have to have the knowledge, but you also have to transpose it, own it and transpose it⁴ and match to the needs of your audience. (Interview with Mentor Gina January 2001.)

This theme emerged more strongly in early interviews than in written comments: mentors in interviews were asked to articulate their concepts of subject knowledge directly, which is not the case with the lesson observation forms. However, notions of ‘relevance’ and ‘match’, and the strategies teachers need to draw upon in order to make knowledge comprehensible to pupils, emerge within other themes which occur more frequently in mentors’ written comments (see fig. 9.1).

Turner-Bissett (1999) suggests that ‘knowledge of learners’ needs to be both cognitive and empirical and these knowledge bases could be seen as being similar to the notions of relevance and match identified by the mentors above. Cognitive knowledge of learners involves both knowledge of child development in a general sense, but also knowledge of the particular needs of specific learners, often described as ‘matching’ their needs. Empirical knowledge of learners, according to Turner-Bissett, is knowledge of what a particular age group is like, very much as mentor Roz above characterises

subject knowledge (Turner-Bissett, 1999:45). Many mentors use the word ‘appropriate’ within their written comments, in the context of subject knowledge being appropriate for the age group, which could also equate with Turner Bissett’s empirical knowledge.

Theme Seven: reference to official curricula, corresponds in part to Shulman’s “curriculum knowledge” (Shulman, 1995: 130). It incorporates specific references to the NLS (DfEE 1998b), the National Curriculum (DfEE 1999a) and the Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage (DfEE 2000a). As the graphs in Appendices Oi – Oiv indicate, mentors frequently cite knowledge of the prescribed curriculum as evidence of subject knowledge, for example in Ann’s comment on page 106.

Good subject knowledge¹...You demonstrate a good knowledge of the National Literacy Strategy⁷ and you know how to teach it.⁹ (Lesson observation comment, Year 3 undergraduate, KS I class, April 2003).

However, it is only in isolated cases that mentors cite familiarity with curriculum documents as the sole evidence of the student teacher’s subject knowledge. The use of the matrix analysis method (see Appendix Hi) shows that references to Theme Seven are linked with other evidence of subject knowledge.

Thorough understanding of breakdown of Literacy Hour⁷.
Good questioning and use of prompts.⁹ Use of targets reinforced during plenary. (Lesson observation comment, Year 2 undergraduate, KS I class, November 2002.)

“Awareness of the needs of pupils”(Theme Eight) as a theme is evident in both written comments and interviews and corresponds both to Turner-Bissett’s cognitive knowledge of learners referred to above (Turner-Bissett, 1999: 45), and an aspect of pedagogical content knowledge according to Shulman:

an understanding of what makes the learning of specific topics easy or difficult, the conceptions and preconceptions that students of different ages and

backgrounds bring with them to the learning of those most frequently taught topics and lessons (Shulman, 1995 p. 130).

Closely allied to this is “awareness of possible pupil misconceptions”, (Theme Six) which both relates to Shulman’s (1995) pedagogical knowledge and also to the HEI’s Guidance Notes on completing the written lesson observation forms, which were influenced by Shulman’s categories. There is a possibility of overlap between these two themes, in that “awareness of possible pupil misconceptions” may have been subsumed into “awareness of the needs of pupils” for some mentors (see Fig. 9.1). Some mentor interviewees whose teaching focus and experience is in Key Stage One or the Foundation Stage, such as Roz placed an awareness of the needs of young children at the centre of their conception of subject knowledge, rather than the subject matter content.

Interviewer: So subject knowledge is... knowing the information but also knowing how ...

Roz: How to get it across to children in a relevant way for a certain age group⁸ There’s a vast difference between a 4 year old coming in and a 7 year old who’s about to go up to Junior school...(It’s how) to make the teaching relevant so it’s not only knowing what your subject is, it’s knowing how responsive the children might be⁸. (Interview with Mentor Roz February 2001)

Content knowledge was a more specific focus for mentors working with students in key stage two classes, and year two classes in key stage one, reflecting the increasing emphasis on subject teaching and assessment as pupils progress through the primary school..

Theme Nine, “use of teaching strategies”, corresponds in part to an aspect of pedagogical content knowledge, and is also referred to in the HEI Notes of Guidance (Appendix Aii). Evidence from interviews and informal discussions suggests that relatively few mentors review the supporting notes after their first one or two lesson observations as new mentors. If this is in fact the case, the concepts of subject knowledge emerging from the written

comments would tend to reflect mentors' own perceptions rather than those of the HEI.

Shulman's definition of pedagogical content knowledge included (Shulman, 1995: 130),

the most powerful analogies, illustrations, examples, explanations and demonstrations – in a word, the ways of representing and formulating the subject that make it comprehensible to others.

Thus where mentors refer to the use of questions, explanations, and modelling processes, as well as to more subject-specific strategies such as shared writing or drama, these references have been allocated to Theme Nine. Mentors have also been influenced by specific pedagogical approaches outlined in the NLS *Framework*, so that this Theme could also be said to correspond to “curriculum knowledge” as well as to pedagogical content knowledge. This issue will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter and in Chapter Ten. However, what is significant, in relation to mentors' concepts of subject knowledge, is the frequency with which teaching strategies are identified as elements of subject knowledge, alongside content knowledge and familiarity with official curriculum documents.

Theme Ten: “confidence” occurs in both interviews and taped conversation as evidence of students' subject knowledge. It seems meant to imply that having secure subject knowledge will engender confidence, a view endorsed by the students in interviews.

Interviewer: Have you got any idea what they (mentors) might have been looking for in order to say your subject knowledge seemed OK?

Student J: Confidence, you showing your confidence¹⁰ so you know what you're talking about.

Student R: Making sure that when you're discussing the aspects of the objective you're explaining, so they know you know what you're talking about², so the children understand⁴.

(Interviews held with former students, Summer 2003)

Student K: If you have good subject knowledge you can answer questions.

Student P: It's better, you can keep your attention on the class.

(Interviews held with Year 2 students, Summer 2003)

Primary mentors' concepts of subject knowledge

The evidence from examination of mentors' written comments and from interviews with the first group of mentors suggests that many primary mentors hold complex concepts of subject knowledge for teaching. These appear to reflect categories similar to those proposed by Shulman (1995), but also to reflect knowledge bases proposed by Turner-Bissett (1999). They are also strongly influenced by the requirements of the NLS, which might be said to correspond to the notion of "school knowledge" as identified by Banks, Leach and Moon (1996). Banks et al., envisaged "school knowledge" as more localised than a national initiative such as the NLS. Nevertheless, local variations in interpretation and delivery of the NLS *Framework* have developed during the period of the investigation.

The relative emphasis placed on content knowledge, curriculum or school knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge by mentors in their written comments will have been influenced by factors both within and beyond the school during the period of the investigation. Their views may also have been mediated by their own beliefs about learning and teaching. In order to consider how mentors' concepts of subject knowledge in English may have been influenced, the next section of the chapter considers changing patterns in mentor's written comments over a three-year period.

Changing patterns in mentors' written comments over the period of the investigation.

A matrix analysis of mentors' comments was completed for each group of undergraduate students in each year of the investigation (see Appendix Hi). The overall number of references to each theme was compared with references to the same theme in different years. As explained in Chapter

Seven there is a need to be careful about drawing conclusions based on relatively small differences between the different academic years as the sample sizes were different.

A block graph to show patterns in mentors' comments for all student groups over the two academic years 2000/1 and 2001/2 is given In Appendix Oi. Further block graphs in Appendices Oii., Oiii and Oiv show variations in patterns in mentors' comments for each undergraduate year group. Comparisons for Year 1 undergraduates (Appendix Oii) are for the three academic years 1999-2002, while comparisons for Year 2 and Year 3 undergraduates (Appendices Oiii and Oiv) are for the academic years 2000-2003. The reasons for this have been explained in Chapter Eight.

The graph in Appendix Oi shows that Themes One, Two, Five, Seven and Nine received the highest number of references during the two-year period 2000-2002. The probable lack of significance of high incidences of Theme One: generic *reference to "subject knowledge and understanding"* was discussed in Chapter Seven. This theme almost always occurs in conjunction with further statements providing supporting evidence. Appendix J shows comparisons of the number of occasions where the only comment takes a form such as "Sound subject knowledge shown". The percentage of such occasions is 11% or less.

Theme Two: knowing *what you are teaching* has had a consistently high profile in mentors' written comments over the period of the research investigation, although there are slight variations in emphasis depending on the students' stage of training. (See Appendices Oi., Oii and Oiii) The high level of emphasis on this theme must be attributed to the effect of the introduction of the NLS, given the close correspondence in many written comments between examples of students' content knowledge and the NLS Objectives for the year group with which the student was working (see Appendix M). The relationship between mentors' comments and developments in the NLS over the three year period will be discussed in the next chapter.

Theme Seven: reference to official curricula shows an increase in 2001/2, particularly for second year students but then a sharp drop in 2002/3. (See Appendix Oiii.) The graphs thus appear to indicate that mentors frequently cite knowledge of the prescribed curriculum as evidence of subject knowledge. However, this may be slightly misleading. The increase for second year undergraduate students in 2001/2 can be attributed to a larger proportion of students being placed in Reception classes at the time of the introduction of the new Foundation Stage documentation. At the mentor conference in April 2002, respondents had given a low priority to knowledge of the structure of the Literacy Hour as an indicator of subject knowledge (see Appendix Kii), and a year later this view appears to have extended to the *Framework* as a whole. By 2002/3, mentors appeared to take familiarity with the NLS *Framework* for granted and most references made to official curricula are for the Foundation Stage rather than the NLS. Interviews held with undergraduate students in summer 2003 support this interpretation: one final year student, describing her previous year's placement in a Key Stage Two class remarked

My second year placement they just sort of assumed that I knew it (i.e. the NLS *Framework*) and that was it.

Theme Five represents examples of advice being given by mentors under the Subject Knowledge heading. The proportions of comments for this theme made for each undergraduate year group remained consistent over the two academic years 2000-2002, but dropped for both Year 2 and Year 3 students in 2002/3 (See Appendices Oiii. And Oiv.). References to this theme have been analysed further, to identify the types of advice given, particularly in relation to the students' stages of training, which is discussed in Chapter Eleven.

However, in 2002/3 the examples of advice given to both Year 2 and Year 3 students were clustered around those teaching in key stage one and particularly the Foundation Stage. The likely explanation for this is that students encountering the Foundation Stage for the first time on this programme are still finding adjustment to the ethos of the Early Learning Goals difficult on occasions, especially if they have had two previous

placements in key stage one, where they have become used to the NLS *Framework*.

You obviously understand the Literacy Strategy but need to be clearer about Reception children's level of work. (Lesson observation comment Year 3 undergraduate, Reception class May 2002.)

You are well aware of the 3 part Literacy Hour required for Years 1 & 2, but this needs to be much more flexible for a Reception group, especially in the Autumn Term. (Lesson observation comment Year 2 undergraduate, Reception class November 2002.)

The publication of the *Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage* (DfEE 2000a) has supported those mentors, such as Roz, quoted above, who identify a distinctive body of subject knowledge for the Early Years which focuses more upon the learning needs of the pupils than on subject content.

Theme Eight: awareness of the needs of pupils, showed an increase for all year groups between 2000/1 and 2001/2 but appears to have dropped sharply in 2002/3. This may be the result of the analysis methods used to allocate comments to themes in the matrix as discussed in Chapter Eight, or it may be due to the increase in references to Theme Nine: *use of teaching strategies*, discussed below.

Theme Nine has emerged as the aspect of mentors' comments that has shown the most significant change over the three-year period. References to this theme increased for all undergraduate year groups in 2001/2 by between 80% and 100% and remained high in 2002/3 (See Appendices Oi. Oii. and Oiii.). It is possible that references to Theme Eight have been displaced as a result. Further investigation of changes in mentors' written comments on observation forms in future years would be needed in order to examine this.

Comments attributed to Theme Nine do not always refer to specific teaching strategies, so that while this element of subject knowledge has gained in

significance for mentors over the period of the investigation, it is not always evident from the written comments what mentors mean. For example teaching strategies are sometimes identified as “appropriate” in comments:

Awareness of appropriate strategies led to a good lesson being demonstrated. (Lesson observation comment, Year 3 student, KS 2 class, June 2002).

Divorced from the context of the post-lesson de-briefing conversation, it is not always possible to tell whether the emphasis is upon recommended strategies within the NLS *Framework* or strategies that match the age group or needs of the pupils. These are significant questions which will be discussed a greater length in the following chapters.

Conclusion

Primary mentors appear to hold taken-for-granted assumptions about student teachers’ content or subject-matter knowledge. In discussions following lesson observations, references to subject knowledge are brief and appear to be stimulated by the HEIs observation pro-forma. Without the requirement to document evidence of subject knowledge it seems likely that primary mentors would not explicitly consider this aspect of student teachers’ professional development unless significant weaknesses in content knowledge were evident.

However, when required to provide evidence of student teachers’ subject knowledge, mentors reveal a more complex conceptualisation involving the transformation of content knowledge to ‘get it across’ to learners. The use of ‘appropriate’ teaching strategies is a significant aspect of the transformative process.

Content or subject-matter knowledge is conceptualised predominantly in terms of knowledge of official curricula, or in terms of the technical view of literacy implicit in the NLS. The impact of the NLS on mentors’ conceptions of subject knowledge in English is discussed in the following chapter.

Overall, the relative emphases on the different themes do not appear to have changed significantly from year to year over the period of the study except for Themes Eight and Nine. There have been some marked changes within the broad themes themselves, particularly for the different undergraduate year groups, which will be discussed in Chapter Eleven.

CHAPTER TEN

Outcomes of the investigation:

Subject Knowledge in English - the impact of the NLS.

Introduction.

The evidence from the lesson observation forms and interviews in the early stages of the investigation indicated that mentors conceptualised subject knowledge in English both in terms of ‘content knowledge’ and ‘pedagogical content knowledge’. There were clear indications that their specific examples of content knowledge were closely related to the national initiatives of the NLS and the Early Learning Goals, later subsumed into the Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage (DfEE, 2000a). The impact of the revised National Curriculum for English (DfEE, 1999a) was negligible in comparison to that of the NLS. This chapter examines evidence to show how mentors’ concepts of content knowledge and of pedagogical approaches to teaching in English are directly and profoundly influenced by these initiatives and documentation. The advice that they give student teachers is also often directed towards delivery of the NLS objectives.

In Chapter Three, it was argued that subject knowledge for teaching is shaped by the teacher’s values and beliefs about the subject, and by their previous experience. This is borne out by the results of interviews with fifteen primary mentors with varying subject backgrounds and experience. Interviews with the second group of five mentors focused on their views about English and literacy, as well as their views about subject knowledge in English, revealing a wide range of positions dependent on the ages of the mentors and their level of personal interest in the subject of English.

The impact of the NLS on conceptions of content knowledge.

The evidence from lesson observation forms shows that patterns of emphasis in mentors’ comments in Theme Two (content knowledge or knowing what you are teaching) are shifting over time in relation to the

shifts in national directives from the central National Strategy team. When the revised lesson observation forms were introduced in autumn 1999, subject knowledge was characterised by some mentors as familiarity with the structure of the Literacy Hour:

The advised literacy format⁷ was followed successfully (Lesson observation comment, Year 1 undergraduate, KS 2 class, February 2000).

She structured the Literacy Hour⁷ in accordance with recommendations (15 min, 15min, 20min, 10 min.)
(Lesson observation comment, Year 2 undergraduate, KSI class, December 1999.)

This emphasis reflected the perceived importance of the Literacy Hour “clock” which was heavily promoted in initial NLS training materials and videos. The other message drawn from the early training materials and courses by many teachers was an emphasis on the formal teaching of phonics and grammar, and the use of “technical” vocabulary. These aspects of content knowledge continue to predominate in mentors’ written comments. There are several likely reasons for this emphasis: initially many teachers felt insecure with formal phonic and grammatical knowledge and thus tended to foreground this aspect in their response to the NLS *Framework*; the use of ‘technical’ language, or understanding of spelling and punctuation ‘rules’ is also easier to identify in student teachers’ classroom practice than ‘text level’ understanding. Also, as Urquart (2002) has argued, the layout of the Framework of objectives implicitly gives precedence to word and sentence level work, rather than to text level.

During 2000/1, two years after the introduction of the NLS Framework, further NLS materials and training programmes were produced to support phonics teaching at key stage one: *Progression in Phonics*, known as PiPs (DfEE, 1999b), and writing development: *Grammar for Writing* (DfEE, 2000b) in key stage two. *The Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage*, incorporating the Early Learning Goals was also published (DfES

2000a). Mentors' written comments reflect the introduction of these documents, particularly with students working in the Foundation Stage.

The documents related to the Foundation Stage⁷ should form the basis of your planning to develop your understanding of the different areas related to teaching and learning in the age⁸ group
(Lesson observation comment, Year 1 undergraduate Foundation Stage, January 2001).

References to familiarity with the PiPs materials occur in mentors' comments for students in Reception and Year One classes as indicators of subject knowledge during 2001/2.

Using a range of appropriate phonic games from PIPS⁷ excellent
(Lesson observation comment, Year 3 undergraduate, Foundation Stage, June 2002).

There was also a strong emphasis on knowledge of the Early Learning Goals/ Foundation Stage Guidance documents in comments made for students in Reception classes. As the graphs indicate, references to knowledge of the NLS Framework as an indicator of subject knowledge in English remained as a significant theme, but there were very few explicit references to the structure of the Literacy Hour from 2001/2 onwards.

Despite the fact that knowledge of text types and features of genre were clearly identified as significant aspects of the teaching of both reading and writing within the Framework, initially teachers did not appear to ascribe the same importance to this aspect of literacy teaching. There is a shift towards a stronger emphasis on text level features in the academic year 2001/2, possibly as a result of further NLS training initiatives (see Appendix M). Specific examples of content knowledge (Theme Two) show a close relationship between the aspects of content knowledge identified in written comments and the NLS objectives for the year group of pupils being taught (see Appendix M and discussion in following chapter).

Continuing developments within the NLS have also been reflected in the conversations mentors hold with students following observed English/literacy lessons.

Rosemary (mentor): *Your subject knowledge. Now you understand that very clearly. Now your strength, your specialist subject, is science isn't it? (Yes) so how do you tackle your subject knowledge? How do you tackle the Literacy Strategy?*

Karen (student): *How do I go back and find things out? I usually start off, I go back to the National Literacy Strategy and... I have the curriculum so I need to work out what I'm exactly doing and when I've worked out what I need to know... I went to the "Writing Book" because I'm doing writing....*

Rosemary: *I'm pleased you use the "Grammar for Writing at KS2" book because that's something we use at school* (Mentor

Rosemary with PGCE student in KS 2 class, December 2002).

In the extract above, "school knowledge" (Banks et al., 1996) is expressed directly in terms of an NLS publication.

Recently, teachers have been advised to use their time flexibly both within the Literacy Hour and to plan units of work relating to text types extending over two or more weeks (DfES, 2001b). This advice is in apparent contrast to that understood by many teachers when the NLS was first introduced (Frater, 2000). It is an indicator of how effective the NLS dissemination process has been, that this more flexible approach to planning and teaching was described as "new thinking" and "the latest research" by a mentor in one de-briefing conversation:

Louise (mentor): *Using the text as a cue to the construction of the work, and of course what that's doing - is the new thinking that's delivering the Literacy Hour that these two week blocks, the first week is very much reading based which is what you did last week (yes) and this week is the writing which of course encompasses those layout skills you've actually been doing. (yes) That means you're putting into place the latest research, well done.* (Mentor Louise with Year 2 undergraduate, KS I class, November 2002.)

Mentors as advisers on students' subject knowledge

The research of Maynard (1996), Edwards and Ogden (1998) and Burgess and Butcher (1999) suggested that mentors had previously been reluctant to engage in discussion about subject knowledge, or to see that consideration of students' subject knowledge was a significant aspect of their role. The first group of interviewees, with the exception of 'Gina', felt that if students had gaps in their subject knowledge identified it was their responsibility was to identify these, but that it was the role of the HEI or individual student to remedy these deficiencies.

Interviewer: Do you think it (subject knowledge) is different at different stages of training?

Mike: I'd worry about it less in the first year (? questioning tone)

I'd be looking for attitudes to planning and the children and particularly the relationship to the class teacher. If they had gaps in their knowledge I'd highlight and expect the College to sort it out. (Interview with mentor Mike, December 2000).

As with the secondary mentors studied by Burgess and Butcher (1999), the mentors interviewed found it easier to discuss examples of subject knowledge in terms of student weakness.

Her lesson plans – there was incorrect vocabulary used, there were misconceptions that she was going to teach the children, there was missing information from topics (Interview with mentor Caroline, March 2001).

She couldn't see the links between where she was going and what the whole point of doing it was (Interview with mentor Susie, November 2000).

The high profile accorded to a particular, technical, concept of subject knowledge in English, promoted through the Literacy Hour training programme had a significant effect upon mentors' willingness to engage with questions relating to student teachers' subject knowledge. This new

willingness was evidenced by the high number of examples of Theme Five, “*advice*”, offered to students during the course of the investigation.

Previously, mentors had offered advice mainly on aspects of classroom management, but the newly introduced section of the observation form for undergraduate students gave them the opportunity (and possibly the permission) to link their advice to the concept of subject knowledge. The advice offered falls into three main categories: advice on content knowledge, advice about issues of classroom management and advice concerning pupils’ learning. The emphases on these three categories vary slightly according to the student’s stage of training, but a more significant difference in relation to stage of training is the form in which the advice is expressed. This will be discussed further in the following chapter.

There are clear links between the advice given to students in terms of underpinning content knowledge, and the requirements of the NLS. As has been noted above, many teachers felt insecure with knowledge of phonics and grammar when the NLS *Framework* was introduced. In the advice and instruction focused on content knowledge, technical knowledge about language predominates, particularly in relation to phonics teaching:

Be careful of using multiple oo’s when teaching the phoneme of a single letter – a point you realised yourself in retrospect.
(Lesson observation comment, Year 2 undergraduate, KS I class, November 2000).

A practical task that contained elements for all learning styles. Practise your phonemes – rrr not ruh! What is the first sound we hear in... is more appropriate than what does x begin with.
(Lesson observation comment, Year 3 undergraduate, Foundation Stage, June 2003.).

There were no examples of mentors providing advice on choice of text, or features of genre, and it appears that their willingness to engage with aspects of content knowledge through written advice on the observation forms is

limited to specific, technical aspects of language use, closely resembling, or directly derived from, NLS training materials and publications.

The impact of the NLS: the use of teaching strategies

The most significant change in emphasis in mentors' written comments over the period of the investigation concerns the increase of comments relating to the use of teaching strategies (Theme Nine) and to a lesser extent those relating to the needs of pupils (Theme Eight). (See Appendices Oi., Oii., Oiii. And Oiv.)

The following chapter considers variations that occur in mentors' comments for students at different stages of training in more detail. However, it does not appear that the types of comment made in Theme Nine alter significantly for different student year groups: the variation is more marked over time.

Some comments categorised under the *teaching strategies* theme lacked specificity e.g. "used appropriate teaching strategies" or "increasingly aware of different strategies", but there were also references to a range of specific strategies on observation forms for all year groups. Questioning received the highest number of references, followed by explaining and modelling and a number of individual references, for example to the use of drama, the use of whiteboards and word banks. Again, it is noticeable that some of these strategies could be explicitly linked to suggested teaching strategies in the NLS materials and to the emphasis on interactive teaching promoted through both the NLS and NNS.

Excellent subject knowledge of the Literacy framework⁷. Objectives related to Year 4 Autumn Term⁷. Correct technical vocabulary² used throughout and children were encouraged to follow suit⁴. A range of teaching techniques were used effectively i.e. discussion, interactive work through sequencing information correctly as a group and writing⁹ (Lesson observation comment, Year 2 undergraduate, KS 2 class, December 2002).

Despite its flawed construction, the Conference questionnaire provided triangulation data alongside evidence from lesson observation forms, debriefing conversations and interviews (See Appendix Kii). Respondents were also asked to identify the three most important aspects of subject knowledge in English from the list. The number of times an aspect was chosen is indicated in brackets. There were 68 respondents.

- Student's choice of teaching strategies and/or resources to deliver learning objectives e.g. drama, investigations (50)
- Student's ability to support pupil learning through questions (50)
- Student's ability to engage the full ability range within the class (57)

with "understanding of how children develop literacy skills e.g. reading/writing/speaking & listening development" as the fourth choice (45). Mentors placed a lower priority, although still a significant one, on aspects of content knowledge such as grammar, sentence construction or knowledge of a range of texts.

The Conference took place prior to the students' final teaching placement and this higher emphasis on the use of teaching strategies, rather than content knowledge, was reflected in the written comments for final year students as shown in Appendix Oiv., which compares comments for final year undergraduates over a three year period.

Despite the number of responses identifying understanding of how children develop literacy skills as an important aspect of subject knowledge in English, this does not enjoy a high profile in written comments, except for students placed in Foundation Stage classes.

Further evidence is provided by the responses of a small group of mentors to a post-Conference questionnaire sent several months later to ascertain the longer lasting impact of the event. Although the response rate was low, about 20%, the replies to a section concerning subject knowledge in English reiterate mentors' views that using appropriate teaching methods and engaging all children in the learning are more significant aspects of English subject knowledge than understanding of technical terms. (See Appendix Lii).

The increased emphasis on teaching methods, particularly questioning, may in part be a result of the promotion of ‘interactive teaching’ through National Strategy publications and training courses, and there are some comments specifically praising or encouraging the use of ‘open questions’:

Good use made of open questions⁹ during main teaching, leading to reflections on pupils’ own experience (Lesson observation comment, Year 2 undergraduate, mixed KSI/2 class, December 2002)

Clear questioning. Do try to open up more questions⁹, although in this session closed questions were suitable. Could you display the word ‘acrostic’? (Lesson observation comment, Year 3 undergraduate, KS I class, June 2003)

(Subject knowledge) evident in the creative ideas you have incorporated in your plan to develop the children’s learning⁸. Excellent use of higher order questions⁹ to encourage the children’s thinking skills.⁸ (Lesson observation comment, Year 3 undergraduate, KS2 class June 2003).

Mentors Mike and Gina, interviewed at early stage of the research, both stressed the importance of knowing about children’s preferred learning styles as an aspect of subject knowledge.

Mike: Well its – you have to know what you’re doing. I think it’s important to know that some children learn in different ways. It important to know that if some children don’t learn in a visual way they might need oral stimulus or you try a great variety of techniques....

Interviewer: So part of subject knowledge is knowing that children have different learning styles?

M Yes you need – you cannot develop a teaching style you have to have a variety of styles. (Interview with mentor Mike, December 2000).

Gina: What I would love to see is more students coming through with all this marvellous research and evidence and work on teaching & learning styles in place as well, and they know what kind of a learner they are, and that they can address the learning styles of their pupils.... what you've got to do is to tailor your lesson to meet everybody's learning style (Interview with mentor Gina, January 2001).

During the period of the research investigation there have been professional development initiatives focusing on teaching and learning styles in the LEAs within which the training partnership operates, and some more recent mentor comments encourage student teachers to be more aware of pupils' learning styles:

Good understanding of technical vocab. and meaning². Good understanding of features of scripts². Aware of VAK (visual, aural, kinaesthetic) learning styles⁸ and tries to incorporate in planning. How can you make your whole class session more K/V? (Lesson observation comment, Year 2 undergraduate, KS 2 class, December 2002,).

You are making effective use of multisensory approaches⁹ to teaching of phonics (Lesson observation comment, Year 2 undergraduate, Foundation Stage class, December 2002).

(see also comment on page 129)

However, such comments are not widespread, and the evidence from lesson observation forms and interviews suggests that the majority of mentors establish their expectations of what students 'need to know' solely in terms of delivering the content of the NLS.

While this evidence indicates a growing confidence and familiarity with the 'common language' (OfSTED, 2000) of the NLS, it does not necessarily indicate an ability to look beyond the use of technical terms to an understanding of the deeper structures and purposes of the subject. There

was no evidence in any of the taped mentoring conversations of mentors and students discussing *why* certain aspects of the literacy curriculum were being taught, other than with reference to the NLS (see mentoring conversation with mentor Louise on p.127).

Even where mentors had indicated in interviews that they held strong beliefs about the purpose of English, or had reservations about aspects of the NLS *Framework*, these views did not often emerge in the discussions with students. While the context of the tape recordings must be borne in mind, as discussed in Chapter Seven, the impression given, and presumably received by the student teachers, was that the NLS objectives represent an authoritative view of literacy learning, and that the role of the teacher is to deliver them effectively.

These findings are in line with those of Edwards and Protheroe (2003:238) who also found that mentoring conversations with student teachers were strongly focused on curriculum delivery. Twiselton (2000) found that the introduction of the NLS had fostered a 'curriculum delivery' model of English teaching, and reduced the number of students who had previously adopted a 'concept/skill building' approach. The evidence from the case study indicates that primary mentors are similarly adopting a curriculum delivery model and fostering this in student teachers.

Banks, Leach and Moon (1996) emphasise the socially situated nature of classroom practice in their challenge to Shulman's model, and maintain that the intersections of knowledge, school knowledge and pedagogy are brought together within 'communities of practice' (Banks et al., 1996:2). However, it can be argued that far reaching intervention of the NLS has undermined the autonomy of 'communities of practice' in the sense intended by Lave and Wenger (1991), so that opportunities for supported reflection on the underlying purposes of English and the literacy curriculum are substantially restricted.

The impact of the NLS: mentors' attitudes and values

Research evidence indicates that teachers who have been trained during the last ten years or so are generally more accepting of the current status quo in respect of the curriculum. The PACE research suggested that newer teachers were “more likely to find satisfaction within a more constrained and instrumental role, without losing their commitment to the affective side of teaching” (McNess et al., 2003:248). Jones, Reid and Bevins (1997) found that younger teachers placed less emphasis on professional development than older, more experienced teachers. Such “composite professionals” (Troman 1996) may be less likely to engage the student teachers they are mentoring in a broader critical discourse. The two groups of mentors interviewed in the case study included teachers who had been teaching for fifteen years or more, and those who had trained since the introduction of the National Curriculum. Some differences in attitude towards the concepts of subject knowledge and its relationship to the NLS emerged in these two groups.

Some of the younger mentors (such as Caroline, see page 137) had trained in the early 1990s, during a period when publicity concerning primary teachers' weaknesses in subject knowledge was at its height following the introduction of the National Curriculum (OfSTED, 1994). An analysis of factors contributing to the theoretical beliefs of effective teachers of literacy (Poulson et. al, 2001:289) shows that the type of training they received was influential, and that theoretical beliefs formed during training appeared to persist during their subsequent careers. The emphasis on subject-matter knowledge, that younger mentors will have experienced throughout their teaching lives, is likely to have influenced their beliefs about English. Similarly, the current emphasis on a particular view of literacy seems likely to have long-lasting effects on student teachers trained during the past few years.

Chapter Three identified research evidence which questioned the central importance of secure subject-matter knowledge for primary teaching (pp. 27-29), compared with forms of pedagogical knowledge, which are often held

tacitly by teachers. There are also differences in attitudes and beliefs about English subject knowledge between those mentors whose main subject interest is not that of English or literacy and those who consider themselves to be English specialists, or who have a strong interest in the area. Grossman et. al, (1989) and Bennett and Turner-Bissett (1993) found that students with specialist knowledge were more likely to enable pupils to develop conceptual structures in those subjects than non-specialists who were more likely to deliver prescribed content.

In the first group of mentor interviewees, some clear distinctions emerged between those mentors who had trained as teachers within the last ten years and those who had trained at an earlier period. The younger group of mentors tended, with one exception (that of Caroline who is an English specialist), to accept the NLS at face value, as an appropriate model of subject knowledge in English. They were also more likely to focus on the writing of clear objectives and the use of appropriate vocabulary as evidence of subject knowledge, which Caroline ascribed to the introduction of the National Curriculum during her training period.

Because I didn't teach before the National Curriculum I've always adhered to whatever documents I'm given, whatever specifications they give, as well as my own personal experience, so it's a balance really (Interview with mentor Caroline, March 2001).

This tendency would support the view that national initiatives over the past decade may have tended to produce teachers, and therefore mentors, whose professional views are more circumscribed than those of teachers with experience prior to the introduction of the National Curriculum and subsequent developments (Pollard et al, 1994, McNess et al., 2003). Those mentors who had trained at an earlier period, and were therefore more experienced teachers, although not necessarily more experienced as mentors, demonstrated a range of views of subject knowledge based more on personal experiences and beliefs about teaching than on the content of documents such as the National Curriculum or NLS.

These mentors talked more about “transposition” to match the needs of learners (Mentors Roz and Gina), and about understanding of teaching and learning styles (Mentors Gina and Mike) as evidence of subject knowledge, rather than the use of correct vocabulary. As such, they reflect a conception of subject knowledge for teaching which more closely resembles that proposed by Banks et al., (1996) rather than that contained within the NLS *Framework* and the ITT NC.

Sandra, who was the English co-ordinator in her school, emphasised the role of speaking and listening, in line with the teachers in Dadds’ (1999) research.

(Subject knowledge is) what they’re drawing out of the children. If they’ve attended to every section, particularly speaking and listening which is the fore-runner of everything else. Whether they’re putting an emphasis on that, and whether they’re understanding that. So their understanding of the processes of what’s going on rather than just feeling they’re filling in the Literacy Hour planning sheet, you know. But do they actually understand the principles behind teaching English? (Interview with mentor Sandra, March 2001).

Distinctions between mentors with different lengths of teaching experience and subject interest were also present in the second group of interviews. The two mentors with the most teaching experience both refer to imagination and creativity as being integral to their view of subject knowledge, although in other respects their beliefs about literacy learning are different.

English to me is not the National Curriculum, it’s not the Literacy Hour, in fact I quite resent it. It’s the whole thing, and being able to experiment, to get children going, particularly creative writing... to me the whole joy of English is to be reading stories, relating those with children, getting the drama in, motivating the children to get them writing and that really is what English is to me. (Interview with mentor Mary June 2003)

The written comment on page 132, referring to creative ideas in the student's plan was made by Mary.

Younger mentors in the second interview group, with between six and twelve years teaching experience, did not refer to imagination or creativity in relation to the subject of English, or subject knowledge, in interviews. Only one member of this group referred to enjoyment as an aspect of literacy learning. In the first group of mentors interviewed, only 'Sandra' specifically mentioned creativity as an important aspect of literacy learning. The post-Conference evaluation (Appendix Li) asked respondents to prioritise statements about the purposes of teaching English. The response rate was low, but the results show a lower priority for "developing imagination and creativity" than for "enabling pupils to communicate effectively with others in society" or "giving pupils literacy skills which will help them succeed in their future lives". This supports Dadd's findings ('round table' session, BERA Conference, University of Leeds, 2002) that creativity figured less prominently in follow-on questionnaires than it had with her first research (reported in Dadds, 1999).

The younger mentors in the second interview group all held positions of responsibility within their schools either as Deputy Heads or subject co-ordinators. Their views about subject knowledge in English and their beliefs about the subject are clearly influenced by the conception of literacy within the NLS *Framework*, although to differing degrees.

Hazel has six years' teaching experience and is the English subject co-ordinator in her school. Like Caroline quoted on page 136, who had only experienced teaching since the introduction of the National Curriculum, she acknowledges that the majority of her teaching experience has been in the context of the NLS. Hazel has clear personal beliefs about English, which correspond closely to many of the principles underpinning the NLS *Framework*, and she believes that she held these views prior to its introduction.

Why do we ask them (pupils) to write stories? I don't think it matters what they're writing, its about control of language

because there will be times when you need to have control of written language and its not only because you're going to have to write a letter one day, it's a way of enabling you to express yourself. (Interview with mentor Hazel. July 2003.)

'Rosemary' similarly sees technical competence as important as a vehicle for communication:

I have the firm belief that we must chase that goal we must make sure that everybody uses the language in the correct way. And also by doing that and being confident and competent to do so enjoy the language and enjoy the experience you can get.

Interviewer: How does your personal belief about English square with the Literacy strategy?

Rosemary: It does and it doesn't. I mean the structure – the emphasis on the importance of getting it right in terms of the technical ability, OK that's great, but where it does lose sight is, I think because we've got bogged down with the technicalities. The overall purpose of language which is to communicate after all, has got lost.

(Interview with mentor Rosemary May 2003).

The second group of mentors' beliefs about the subject of English again relate closely to their subject specialist roles within their schools. Nick, who is not an English specialist, is clear that he found the NLS Framework helpful. His attitude is very similar to that of the teacher interviewed by Wright (1999), discussed in Chapter Three, page 33.

I'm happy with the Numeracy Strategy and the Literacy Strategy. My thinking is if there are people with the directives and the advice I'll take it on board and I don't want to design it, I want to receive it. So there's no ethical problem for me in receiving it. The literacy strategy – it's called literacy isn't it and not English – so there's an emphasis on building blocks and skills which for my personality is quite helpful. You know I'm not an English

specialist, the way I think and work, building blocks and structure and that – not a problem to me. (Interview with Nick. April 2003.)

In respect of his attitudes to literacy, Nick clearly resembles the new ‘technicist’ professionals described by Troman (1996). However, it is possible that his response might have been different had the topic been that of his own area of subject specialism.

Hazel also considers that the NLS *Framework* is supportive for non-specialists:

I mean you have to acknowledge its value for people who weren't quite so confident or who found it more difficult to teach English ... I still think it provides a very useful framework. And I think particularly for students in training it has got to be a very good framework for them still.

(Interview with mentor Hazel. July 2003.)

These comments are supported by other research into teachers' views about the literacy hour (Fisher and Lewis, 1999, Anderson et al., 2000). They are also borne out in a slightly different way by one of the students interviewed:

I think I need to have a set structure, Literacy isn't my strongest subject and I think if I could just chose what I wanted to do I'd pick the more drama side of things and the creative side and I possibly won't look at the other...

Here it appears that the student's conception of ‘Literacy’ revolves around the more technical aspects of language, which she needs to be ‘told’ to do, rather than encompassing the ‘creative side’. In response to another student's comment that children no longer seem to have imagination, she expands her point:

Interviewer: You said you needed the structure. Why?

Student B: I think because I wouldn't necessarily pick out the word level work. I just think that unless I was being told to do that, I would much more enjoy... I think it (word level work) does possibly help them to understand what they're doing more,

*and it does perhaps extend their writing and their thinking about
'Well perhaps I could put this word here', but I think there's a
bit of an overload on it. I think it's taking away.... (they're)
thinking all the time, 'Have I got an adjective here to describe
that word and have I got, you know, this word in my story?
'Where's the beginning middle and end?'*

(Interview with Year 4 subject-specialist group. Student above is
not an English specialist. June 2003).

The student's insight into the children's experience of literacy learning suggests that she, like Mary and like Rosemary (see Appendix Ciii extract 3), may experience conflicts between her personal beliefs and the requirements of the NLS in her first teaching post.

The NLS *Framework* is capable of interpretation on two levels: as one which emphasises the place of real texts in literacy learning and which can support a meaning led orientation to English, where word and sentence level features are embedded in whole texts which are meaningful to pupils; or one which focuses on a technical, linguistic approach to literacy that supports a functional orientation to English and may result in the teaching of discrete skills and dis-embedded language features. The evidence from the interviews and taped conversations shows that mentors who do not have a personal interest in English are less likely to hold a meaning led orientation to literacy. These orientations, in their turn, will affect mentors' concepts of appropriate pedagogical strategies. The work of Mroz et al., (2000), English et al., (2002) and Hardman et al., (2003) shows that there has been an increase in the amount of teacher questioning since the introduction of the National Strategies, but there has also been an increase in convergent questions.

If student teachers are to be supported in developing deeper understanding of English through their work in schools, the present systems of mentoring, whether by a class teacher or a senior colleague within the school, may not be a reliable mechanism for this purpose.

The influence of the HEI on mentors' conceptions of subject knowledge in English

I have discussed the findings that indicate that mentors would not, of their own accord, comment on student teachers' subject knowledge. The re-designing of the lesson observation forms within my own HEI to include a specific section on subject knowledge and understanding was a direct response to the key headings in Circulars 14/93 (DfEE, 1993) and more particularly Circular 4/98 (DfEE, 1998c). While this is not to say that subject knowledge had been ignored previously, it had been subsumed within the context of planning, and was thus less explicit as an area for consideration.

Circular 4/98 also required HEI to audit student teachers' subject knowledge to ensure they met the ITT NC requirements. As a result, many students' perceptions of subject knowledge were shaped by the audit process which focused on grammatical and phonemic knowledge. This view of subject knowledge was further reinforced by some of the materials produced by the NLS (*Progression in Phonics*, DfEE, 1999b, *Grammar for Writing*, DfEE, 2000b), and consolidated by students' experiences in schools during the last three years. At the same time, HEI tutors were promoting a meaning-led and flexible approach to literacy teaching. Messages about English teaching in general have thus been experienced by at least some students as "ambivalent and contradictory", leading one student to say that while on her final teaching practice she felt it necessary to perform in one way "for the College" and in another for the school.

External pressures of OfSTED inspections over the past six years have meant that many HEI have focused their work with partner schools on ensuring consistency of judgement against the Standards for the Award of QTS including the requirements of the ITT NC. The congruence between the demands of Circular 14/98 (DfEE, 1998c) and those of the NLS has already been noted. My own HEI has been no exception.

Thus the mentor training courses, professional meetings and conferences for mentors have been dominated by response to central Government initiatives.

During and immediately prior to the period of this investigation, training initiatives and consultation with mentors in schools have focused mainly on developing assessment criteria to support consistency of judgement against the Standards for the Award of Qualified Teacher Status. These discussions focused firstly on Circular 4/98 (DfES, 1998c); and then later on *Qualifying to Teach* (DfEE, 2002) and on informing mentors of how the HEI prepares students to teach numeracy and literacy in relation to the requirements of the national Strategies. The perception of the role of the HEI in many mentors' eyes may thus be one of support for, or accommodation to, national initiatives in respect of ITET and literacy. It remains to be seen whether the changes in the OfSTED inspection arrangements for ITET will bring about a change in culture in this respect.

Additionally, the model of mentoring practice encouraged by the HEI, partly as a response to the pressures from the policy directives outlined above, is not necessarily conducive to open discussion between mentors and student teachers. Mentor training courses run by HEI tutors have stressed the importance of a responsive inter-personal approach to discussions following lesson observations, and of the need to extend student teachers' professional understanding through the use of higher order questions. However, these discussions have also been frequently characterised as 'feedback' or 'de-briefing' conversations (see for example, Appendix E i). This language creates expectations in the minds of both mentors and student teachers as to the function of the discussion: that it will focus on the student teacher's performance.

Mentors exist within their school contexts in a culture of performance-led appraisal. They frequently comment in training sessions that they already know about the skills of observation and feedback through appraisal training. In implicitly accepting that these 'skills' are transferable to the context of discussion following lesson observation, HEI tutors are confirming a performance orientation to mentor-student teacher interaction. This may be further inhibiting opportunities for the more tentative conversations needed to examine theoretical beliefs about English and literacy learning.

Edwards and Protheroe (2003:238) argue that the structure and operation of these conversations derives from a model associated with the role of HEI tutors, prior to the introduction of the “partnership” model of ITT, which is inappropriate for the mentoring context in primary schools. The following chapter provides a further examination of the tape-recorded mentoring conversations in the context of ‘moving students on’ beyond the ‘plateau’ stage of development.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Outcomes of the investigation:

Mentoring for teacher development in English

Subject knowledge and stages of student teacher development

One of the early research questions concerned mentors' expectations of students at different stages of training and whether mentors would ascribe greater or lesser importance to issues of subject knowledge at different stages of student development. Analysis of comments from lesson observation forms led to a comparison of patterns in the themes emerging from the written comments on both a year by year basis for each student group (see Appendices Oii., Oiii. and Oiv.), and between different student groups within the same calendar years (Figs 11.1, 11.2 in this chapter). The matrix analysis and resulting graphs identify variations in emphasis on certain themes, depending on the students' stages of training. These suggest that mentors hold implicit beliefs about teacher development and the priorities they attribute to aspects of student teacher learning.

The mentors in the first interview group did not feel that subject knowledge was more or less important at any stage of students' training, but rather saw progress in subject knowledge as a cumulative process

I would hope the students are building it up as they go along and each practice they're building it up a little bit more.
(Interview with mentor Susie March 2001.)

I think as they develop they are able to see things in a wider perspective. I remember when I was an NQT finding it very difficult to work out which unit of work they needed to do for which part of a child's development. I wasn't quite sure what needed to come before- which steps and which order the steps came in (Interview with mentor Jane, November 2000).

Jane's notion of the wider perspective has resonances with the literature on student teacher development (Furlong and Maynard, 1995) where the

student teacher's focus of attention expands from a pre-occupation with self towards an awareness of the needs of learners.

The influence of the NLS *Framework* with a pre-determined sequence of objectives has meant that the notion of progression has not emerged as a strong theme elsewhere in the evidence, because of its focus on English. 'Louise' is the exception to this, as parts of her conversation with a second year student focus on where the learning might go next, and how the student might follow the observed lesson up.

However, there is evidence that mentors in the case study do hold concepts of progression in student teacher's professional development which include an increasing awareness of the needs of pupils as learners.

Variations in the main themes

Figs 11.1 and 11.2 below show comparisons of the incidence of the themes identified in mentors' written comments between the three undergraduate year groups in the academic years 2000/2001 and 2001/2002. Comparisons between three undergraduate year groups can only be made for the academic years 2000/1 and 2001/2, as previously explained.

The significance of comments categorised in Theme One have been discussed in Chapters Seven and Eight. The focus on content or subject-matter knowledge, Theme Two, is highest for first year undergraduates in both years shown. Although there were also a high number of references to content knowledge for third year students in 2000/2001, these were predominantly references to the use of 'technical' vocabulary, and as discussed in Chapter Ten this was still an aspect of subject knowledge that was of concern to teachers at that time. Fig. 11.2 shows a significant reduction in Theme Two comments for second and third year students, which was sustained in 2002/2003 (Appendices Oiii. and Oiv.). It was argued in Chapter Ten that this is an indication that mentors now take much subject matter knowledge in English for granted, although their views about the nature of subject matter knowledge may be restricted to the technical aspects of literacy.

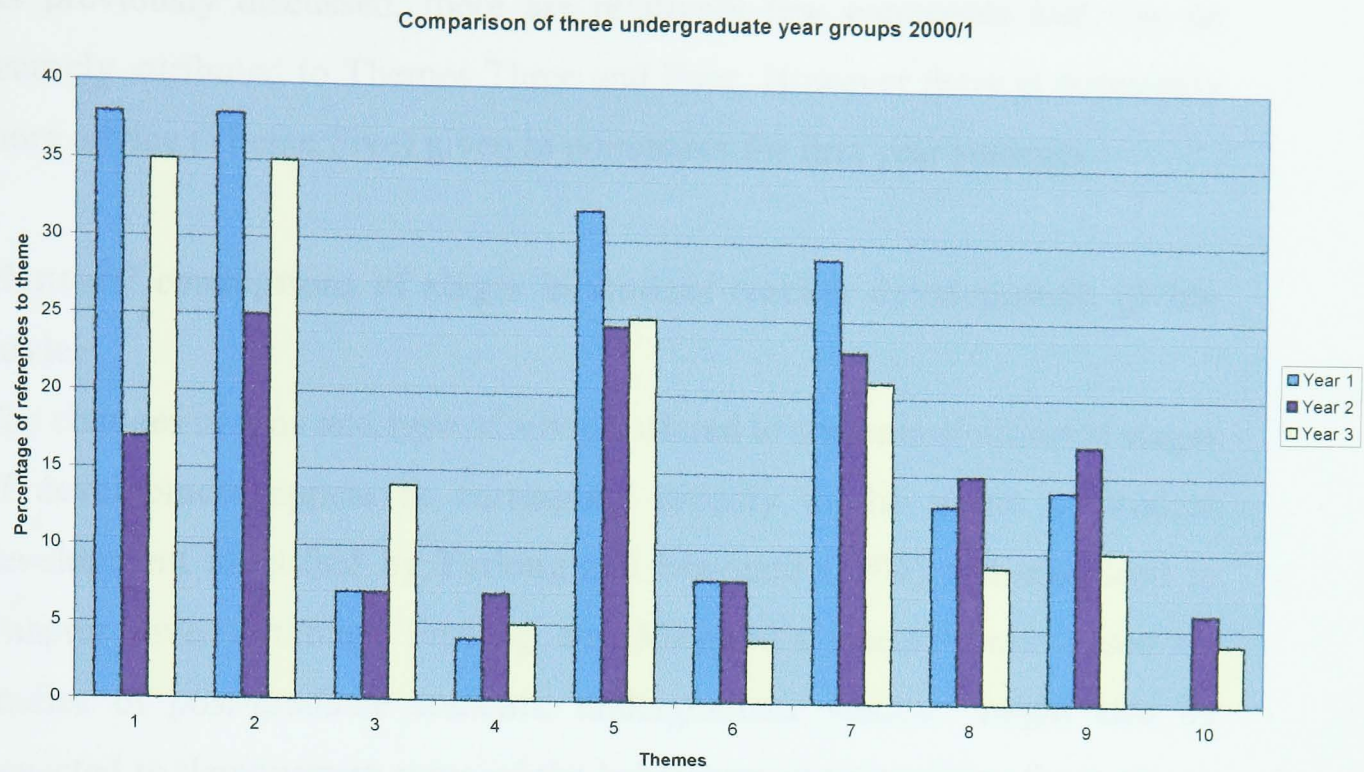


Fig 11.1 Academic Year 2000/2001

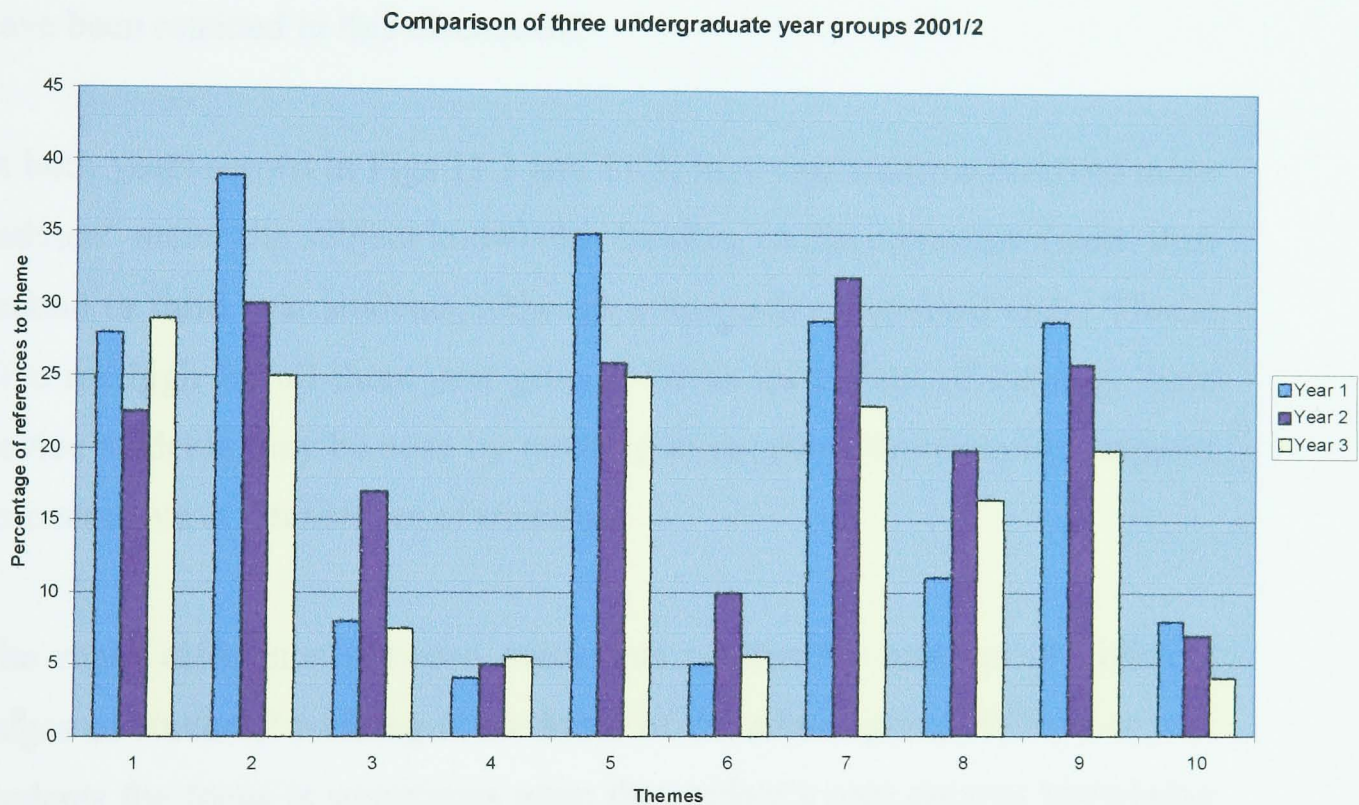


Fig 11.2 Academic Year 2001/2002

Themes

- | | |
|-----|--|
| 1. | generic reference to "subject knowledge & understanding" |
| 2. | "knowing what you are teaching" |
| 3 | reference to subject knowledge as evident in plans/ lesson objectives/ knowing what you wanted the children to learn |
| 4 | being able to "get it across" |
| 5 | advice about lesson content or management |
| 6 | reference to pupil difficulties or misconceptions |
| 7 | specific reference to the NLS/reference to use of appropriate vocabulary |
| 8 | reference to pupils' needs as learners |
| 9. | reference to use of teaching strategies |
| 10. | reference to "confidence" |

As previously discussed, there are relatively few comments that can be securely attributed to Themes Three and Four. However there is noticeably more advice (Theme Five) given in comments for first year students.

Mentors' conceptions of stages in student teacher development: giving advice.

The changes in tone and type of advice offered to students at different stages of development appear to correspond broadly to the stages of student development identified by Furlong and Maynard (1995) and discussed in Chapter Five. Although Furlong and Maynard's research was based on studies of post-graduate students, undergraduate students might also be expected to demonstrate some of the behaviours characterising these stages of development and Furlong and Maynard's terminology and descriptions have been retained in this discussion.

In both years shown in Figs 11.1 and 11.2, first year students received more "advice" under the subject knowledge heading on the comment sheets, than second or third year students, although comments categorised under Theme Five are high for all three year groups. Given their stage of training, these novice students may be seen by mentors as requiring more explicit support than students at later stages of training.

The main difference between comments written by mentors at different stages of students' training is the focus of the advice given. With first year students the focus is sometimes upon the student's own content knowledge (particularly phonics) as previously discussed:

Ensure you use the pure sound in phonics teaching (Lesson observation comment Year I undergraduate, Reception class, January 2000).

but also often takes the form of 'hints' relating to classroom management.

Make sure you have several definitions or examples at your fingertips (Lesson observation comment Year I undergraduate KS2 class, January 2000).

You could have written the words on the board to match the objects (Lesson observation comment Year I undergraduate KS2 class, February 2001).

Consider why the class teacher seats the pupils in their chairs when presenting text this way. Some pupils were behind you and had difficulty viewing the text. (Lesson observation comment, Year I undergraduate KSI class, January 2001).

According to Furlong and Maynard, in the “survival” stage, which is centrally concerned with issues of classroom control, students look primarily for ‘hints and tips’ that will enable them to be seen by the pupils as “a teacher” (Furlong and Maynard, 1995). Mentors are also likely to place a high priority on classroom control with less experienced students and this can be seen in the examples of advice given to first year undergraduates.

Furlong and Maynard’s next stage, that of “recognising difficulties” is not easy to distinguish through examining the mentors’ comments, since this stage was identified as an aspect of the student’s awareness, rather than that of the mentor. However, Furlong and Maynard suggest that this stage is often characterised by students attempting to mimic the behaviours of their class teacher.

Indeed for many students, it is likely that this was all they considered teaching was about (Furlong and Maynard, 1995: 82).

In one or two examples the student’s effective teaching is seen as deriving from observation and by inference through imitation:

() has carefully observed the methods of teaching reading/writing in this class and so has been able to extend the children’s learning (Lesson observation comment Year I undergraduate, January 2001.)

In the ‘plateau’ stage Furlong and Maynard suggest that students may find difficulty in shifting their focus from their own performance to that of the

learner. They believe they have acquired ‘teacherly’ behaviours, and can be reluctant to try new ideas. The role of the mentor in “moving them on” from this stage has been discussed in Chapter Five.

In interview ‘Nick’ identified this as part of the mentor’s role:

Nick: I would say in feedback in discussion I would say quite often the first phrase (from the student) would be about behaviour or noise level and in fact the role of the mentor is sometimes to talk about learning and not just about classroom management.

Interviewer: And you as the mentor would be putting that into the conversation – it wouldn’t come naturally from the student?

Nick: I’d say it wouldn’t come first, or high.

(Interview with mentor Nick April 2003).

While advice continues to be offered to second year students in relation to their content knowledge and classroom management:

Check definition of suffix - not all words ending in –al use it as a suffix (Lesson observation comment, Year 2 undergraduate, KS2 class, November, 2000).

It may have helped if you had used an OHP rather than the board. You would then have been facing the group (Lesson observation comment, Year 2 undergraduate, KS2 class, November 2001).

there is a greater emphasis on pupil learning, rather than on the ‘tips for teachers’ evident in the advice to first year students.

You now need to use appropriate teaching strategies to ensure the knowledge is used to enhance the opportunities to improve pupils learning (Lesson observation comment, Year 2 undergraduate, KS2 class, December 2000).

Fact/fiction is a very difficult concept – the children need gradual introduction (Lesson observation comment, Year 2 undergraduate, KSI class, November 2001)

Very good understanding of literacy. Because of overload of lesson some children confused by too many new things e.g. alliteration and onomatopoeia. Assumed too much previous knowledge. Need to break down into smaller units over weekly planning (Lesson observation comment, Year 2 undergraduate, KS2 class December 2001).

This emphasis continues in comments made on third year (final year) students.

Consider using multisensory approaches when teaching phonics (Lesson observation comment, Year 3 undergraduate, Foundation Stage class May 2000).

Try to ensure you allow enough time for the plenary so that issues can be ironed out. It would have been an ideal opportunity to discuss the meaning of more difficult phrases (Lesson observation comment, Year 3 undergraduate, KS2 class June 2001).

In comments made for final year students, the advice is often intended to encourage students to reflect more closely on the specifics of pupil learning than the majority of examples given to second year students. For example, this comment made for a student working with a Year One class challenges her to consider the learning activity from the child's point of view as a beginning reader:

Some of the words which you covered over were difficult for the children to work out from initial sounds e.g. are, out (Lesson observation comment, Year 3 undergraduate, KSI class, May 2001).

Several other comments focus on the importance of matching teaching activities to pupils existing levels of understanding or skill:

Don't make assumptions about children's knowledge but ascertain through good questioning (Comment on Year 3 student, KS2 class. 2001/02).

For reasons discussed below, the categorisations for third year students become more difficult, due to the multilayered nature of many of the comments. This shift in focus may be related to individual students reaching the 'plateau' stage of development, so that their mentors are attempting to refocus their attention in terms of learning and teaching. At the same time it would reflect mentors' own beliefs about the relationship between subject knowledge and pupils' learning.

While relatively few mentors may be aware of the stages of development suggested by Furlong and Maynard in a formal sense, these shifting emphases in their views of subject knowledge for beginning teachers suggest a similar notion of progression. This parallel between these findings and the stages of student development proposed by Furlong and Maynard is interesting precisely because the stages they identified relate to students' perceptions and not to those of mentors. The case study evidence suggests that some mentors may believe students can only cope with "hints and tips" in the early stages of training and thus limit their feedback accordingly, creating a self-fulfilling prophecy. There are implications for further research and for a review of practice by the HEI in its mentor training and support, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

Furlong and Maynard's students were post-graduates, and tended to reach the plateau stage about two thirds of the way through their one year training. They suggest that the reasons for the plateau stage could perhaps be attributed to "traditional" beliefs on the part of some student teachers about the nature of teaching and learning, or to a lack of desire to engage with teaching other than on the level of transmission of facts, which was perceived as easier to manage (Furlong and Maynard, 1995: 91). Even where some of the students in their study held beliefs about learning which were more complex, they found it hard to put these into practice in practical situations, especially in primary classrooms:

For all the students, then, whether due to values and beliefs about how children learn, or because of their lack of control, there was at this stage a difficulty with actually devising and giving lessons that reflected a detailed engagement with children's understanding and their learning over time (Furlong and Maynard, 1995: 92).

There are indications that some of the mentors in my own study were seeing this level of engagement as an aspect of subject knowledge, particularly with students in their final year, and offering advice accordingly:

Try now to extend your knowledge of more active teaching strategies to vary pupil tasks (Lesson observation comment, Year 3 undergraduate, KS2 class, June 2001).

Have confidence in your ability to change the direction of your plans (Lesson observation comment, Year 3 undergraduate, KS2 class, May 2001).

Further examples of mentors' comments which reflect this belief in deeper involvement in children's learning are discussed later in this chapter.

It is clear from the language used that, although some types of comments are broadly similar in terms of the theme or topic they refer to, the context in which they are made is very different depending on the students' stage of training. In other words, mentors' perceptions of students' subject knowledge appear to be developmentally situated in terms of range, rather than type, of behaviour.

With first year students, the language is often directive in tone, with the use of imperative verbs, as in the examples on page 150. At later stages of student training conditional tenses become more common; "You might like to think about" or "it may have helped ... (see page 152). The relationship between the writing style of mentors in terms of grammatical constructions used, and the stage of student training, has not been examined in detail in this investigation, but could be an area for further research.

The notion of “appropriateness”

A further example of language shifts according to context and stage of training is the changing use of the word “appropriate”. Mentors often use the word “appropriate” applied to subject knowledge with first and second year students. Comments made for first year students sometimes suggest that their expectations of less experienced students are limited to the underpinning knowledge required to deliver a single lesson and do not necessarily involve any wider knowledge of aspects such as progression in pupil learning in English.

Your subject knowledge was appropriate for this lesson (Lesson observation comment: Year I undergraduate, KS I class, January 2002)

Your subject knowledge is appropriate for the age of the children (Lesson observation comment: Year I undergraduate, KS I class, January 2002)

Subject knowledge and understanding are appropriate to ()’s level of experience as a Yr I student. There are aspects to be developed in ()’s knowledge and understanding of creative writing. (Lesson observation comment: Year I undergraduate, KS 2 class, January 2002)

These limited expectations of students, and the assumption that they will not yet be ‘joining up’ their thinking may be self-fulfilling assumptions. These mentors would be less likely to raise issues such as progression in learning in their conversations with students and thus the students’ own professional learning will not be challenged.

With second and final year students, where mentors comment on appropriate aspects of lessons these aspects are more likely to be related to choice of teaching strategy or match of the lesson to the age group of the pupils:

Use of language is appropriate and moving children's learning on
(Lesson observation comment, Year 2 undergraduate, KSI class,
November 2000)

*() showed a good understanding of the subject. She used
appropriate strategies in all parts of the Literacy Hour* (Lesson
observation comment, Year 2 undergraduate, KS2 class,
December 2001)

*Awareness of appropriate teaching strategies led to a good lesson
being demonstrated.* (Lesson observation comment, Year 3
undergraduate, KS2 class, June 2002)

*Miss () showed a good knowledge and understanding of
developing early language skills. The language she used was
appropriate and developmental for the children.* (Lesson
observation comment, Year 3 undergraduate, Foundation Stage
class, May 2002)

As Chapter Ten indicates, the impact of the NLS on mentors' concepts of subject knowledge in English has been considerable, both in terms of the prescribed content and the recommended pedagogical approaches. This leads to some uncertainties about whose concept of "appropriateness" is being acknowledged in some of the written comments.

As has been noted in the previous chapter, comments attributed to Theme Nine, *teaching strategies*, do not vary significantly according to the stage of student training. Teaching strategies are quite often identified as "appropriate" in comments:

Teaching strategies were appropriate to the lesson (Lesson
observation comment: Year 2 undergraduate, KS I class, January
November 2001).

Appropriate and effective teaching strategies were used for the literacy objective (Lesson observation comment: Year I undergraduate, KS 2 class, January 2001).

However, divorced from the context of the post-lesson de-briefing conversation, it is not possible to tell whether the emphasis is recommended strategies within the NLS *Framework* or strategies which match the age-group or needs of the pupils. As noted in Chapter Eight this sometimes made coding such comments difficult in the analysis stage of the research.

“Moving on” – mentoring and subject knowledge with students on final placement.

Notions of ‘flexibility’, ‘initiative’ and ‘intuition’ occur in a few instances in comments and conversation with final placement students as an aspect of subject knowledge.

Keith: The other thing that you could think about there, providing that you plan it properly and you can give a justification for what you’re doing, you can move around the parts of the lesson, so if you were in a position where you were being told more forcibly to do the sentence level work that you were doing, you could have started that with that sentence level work and done that, and then you would have had the flow between the text and the guided group work as well, so there are ways and means around it, it’s not a straight jacket. As a teacher, you can use your initiative and common sense to ...

Student Peter: You need to be flexible.

Keith: Providing you have got the elements in there, and you’re not always leaving something out, or always doing the favourite thing, then that’s fine, but think about it and justify it positively and then you can use that. (Mentoring conversation, June 2002).

Good knowledge of subject. Could you have used ICT to make text larger? Encouraged children with your own ideas. Drew them back to similes continually. Well done. Intuitive. You pick things up children say and expand/explain them (Lesson observation comment, Year 3 undergraduate, KS2 class, June 2002).

This language use indicates shifting expectations of students as they near the end of training, in terms of professional expectations of behaviour and attitudes. On the basis of mentors' written comments, student teachers about to enter the profession seem to be expected to be responsive to the learning needs of children and to have sufficient underpinning subject knowledge to be able to meet these needs. Their abilities to use appropriate teaching strategies to engage pupils in learning are seen as being more significant than content knowledge, which is assumed to be "adequate" or "appropriate" for the task.

In the comments made on teaching strategies (Theme Nine) for final year students, questioning enjoys a high profile, as indicated in the Conference questionnaire responses discussed in the previous chapter (Appendix Kii) but there are also several comments which ascribe value to "stimulating" or "exciting" teaching – either through its presence or absence in the observed lesson.

Within the constraints of the instruction format you still managed to instil excitement about the magical quality of the mask, leading to tomorrow's sustained writing, which showed your understanding of your children developmentally. (Lesson observation comment, Year 3 under graduate teaching, KSI class, June 2002)

You were sure of your subject, but need to be more innovative (Lesson observation comment, Year 3 under graduate, KS2 class June 2002)

The broader knowledge of how children learn is seen to underpin a successful lesson. The choice of vocabulary is particularly interesting in the

first example: the student's appreciation of the writing genre is acknowledged, while at the same time, her skill in transcending its potential limitations is celebrated in "excitement" and "magical".

The comments written for students in their final year become harder to categorise as the language is denser, reflecting increased expectations. It is as if mentors' expectations that students will make more complex links between content knowledge, curriculum knowledge, knowledge of learners, of the school context and of pedagogy is reflected in their syntax. There are also some indications that individuality as opposed to conformity (to prescribed curricula) may be seen as significant.

You obviously have a clear understanding of literary devices and were able to draw these from the children. You also demonstrated a thorough understanding of how children learn by getting them to further develop and justify their answers and by having visual clues to identify specific phrases. (Lesson observation comment, Year 3 under graduate, KS 2 class May 2002)

In this example, content knowledge (*theme 2*) is broadly conceptualised, rather than tied closely to the specific objectives of the NLS for the term and year group being taught, as is often the case with students at an earlier stage of training. The transformational nature of pedagogical content knowledge is acknowledged (*theme 4*) in terms of "drawing knowledge out" of pupils. Subject knowledge for teaching is located within the broader knowledge base of "how children learn" which is then exemplified in terms of teaching strategies (*theme 9*) which both challenge - "further develop and justify"- and support learning - "having visual clues to identify specific phrases".

In these examples, mentors' personal beliefs and values about effective teaching and learning and about the subject of English are more explicit than in comments written for students at earlier stages of training. Mentors such as these may have a conception of effective teaching akin to that of the "expert teacher" (Berliner 1995, Turner-Bissett 1999) which they are encouraging their students to move toward through valuing attributes such

as broader understanding of pupil learning and flexibility, and they may see the earlier, more pragmatic, issues as a necessary part of the journey.

On the evidence from the case study, these mentors are in the minority within the Partnership. The work of the PACE project, carried out over ten years shows that the individual context of the school, often associated with particular leadership styles could foster or impede the “creative mediation” of external policy directives. Where teachers feel confident, they respond creatively to new initiatives, but where confidence has been eroded by constant feelings of pressure to ‘deliver’ they are more likely to conform unquestioningly to external requirements (Osborn et al, 1997, Osborn et al 2000).

On a more cautious note, the recent emphasis by the NLS on increased flexibility in planning and teaching literacy could also be influential. This has been disseminated through NLS briefings and training sessions and also strongly supported by the HEI both in taught sessions with students and through the mentor Conference. However, whether mentors are displaying their intrinsic values or reflecting those promoted by the NLS and HEI in respect of flexibility of approach, they retain an emphasis on the importance of meeting the learning needs of pupils as central to the role of the teacher.

Mentoring conversations: more support than challenge.

In Chapter Five, I discussed the tensions experienced by mentors in relation to the notion of “challenge”. Furlong and Maynard’s final stage of student teacher development, “moving on” (Furlong and Maynard, 1995: 92), frequently requires the active intervention of the mentor in order for students to broaden their thinking and to reflect on the wider purposes of their actions in the classroom.

Active intervention is necessarily based on the opportunity for discussion and questioning and the written comments on lesson observation forms are unlikely to reflect this aspect of mentoring for professional development. Indeed, in some cases, student evaluations of their experiences suggest that what is written bears very little direct relation to the de-briefing conversation (see Appendix I).

In the de-briefing conversations which form part of the case study, explicit discussion about subject knowledge takes place when the discussion is sequentially structured by the HEI lesson observation form (see Appendix Eiii). As with the teachers in Edwards and Ogden's (1998) study, there is little generalisation from the particular lesson to broader issues, and the comments are often constrained within the requirements of the NLS:

Not all the mentors who participated in the investigation used the observation form headings to structure their de-briefing conversations, and as a result references to subject knowledge were less explicit or nonexistent in some cases.

As with the written comments under the Subject Knowledge heading on the observation form, mentors working with final year students sometimes discuss subject knowledge in more complex terms:

You encouraged them really well to draw their own ideas out of them. You kept on pulling the similes out of them all the time, which I thought was really good. Well done. You know they said something and you said well it's like so and so and they came with it. You're also, you're also very intuitive I think because you can pick up ideas that the children, things that they say like when you were walking round and someone said something in the bit where they were writing and you said "Oh do you know what that is?" (*yeah*) and you expanded it, so that is very much, you know, picking up on their ideas and really very good. (Mentor Mary with Year 3 undergraduate June 2002).

This mentor's conception of subject knowledge appears to revolve around the notion of scaffolding pupils' learning. The mentor is using the HEI observation form to structure her feedback and the reference to intuition is particularly interesting when located in this part of the de-briefing conversation, which purports to focus on subject knowledge. Qualities such as intuition, knowing when to intervene in pupils' learning, are qualities ascribed to "expert" as opposed to "novice" teachers.

What is particularly noticeable in most of the taped conversations, and what is evident in the extract above is the continual use of positive, ‘motivational’ language and the absence of any ‘challenging’ questions about the broader educational purposes of the observed lesson or the nature of the subject. Both Burgess and Butcher (1999) and Edwards and Collison (1996) found that some primary mentors were reluctant to appear to criticise students in case this was de-motivating.

While the use of direct advice is the obvious way in which mentors ensured that students were delivering the requirements of the NLS, as they perceived them, validation through positive reinforcement is probably an even more powerful method of acculturation. The taped de-briefing conversations show positive language use as vastly predominating over more directive or overtly critical language constructions. In interview, one former student recalled an occasion when her mentor questioned her about her planning decisions as being the way in which her subject knowledge was supported:

Interviewer: So he was actually asking you to justify the techniques you were using?

Student: I suppose he was being more encouraging really about what I was doing. ...Saying “It was good that you did that”, so it reinforced my confidence as far as the activity I’d planned.

(Interview with former students, June 2003).

There are also many examples of positive language use in written comments, for all undergraduate year groups, throughout the period of the study. In some cases the written comments single out aspects of students’ subject knowledge for praise in such a way as to reinforce particular behaviours which are specifically related to aspects of the NLS *Framework* and recommended pedagogy (for example the comment on page 134 in Chapter Ten). In this way they could be viewed as “advice”, just as much as more directive examples of language use. The powerful effect of such positive feedback upon novice teachers should not be under-estimated.

Mentoring conversations: an appropriate form of reflective discourse?

Although the taped mentoring conversations have not been subjected to a full analysis, it has become noticeable that there are features of the discourse structures of the conversations which may be inhibiting reflective discussion, just as much as their situated subject matter.

In the case study examples, the mentoring conversations took the form of “feedback” after observed English lessons. The natural features of conversation structures were transformed into much more formal structures, and shared a number of features with ‘institutional talk’ as identified in discourse analysis (see Chapter Seven).

Asymmetrical structures were typical of the majority of the taped conversations and indicate the ways in which these types of discussion share features with other forms of institutional talk. In only two of the tape recorded conversations are there sequences in which the student teacher aligns herself to the questioner role. In all others, this role remains the prerogative of the mentor, and the student teacher is aligned with the more passive respondent or recipient role.

Much of the mentor discourse is descriptive, elements of the observed lesson are re-presented to the student, usually prefaced by a phrase such as “I liked the way you...”. Edwards and Ogden (1998) also note this tendency to “recycle the stock which had already informed the actions of the students” (Edwards & Ogden, 1998:747).

When the conversation structures were considered, patterns were noted which are consistent with those identified in other forms of institutionalised discourse. The use of the Initiation-Response-Feedback/Evaluation chain (Sinclair and Coulthard, 1975) was replicated in mentor/student conversations, as was “cued elicitation” (Billig et al, 1988) (see appendix N example 2).

Charge/rebuttal sequences occurred in some conversations, in which students sought to refute explicit or implied “charges” of deficiency in their performance. As these conversations have an assessment dimension, the strategic goals of students in refuting charges, if at all possible, are significant (see Appendix N example 4)

It began to become evident that mentors and student teachers often collaborated with each other in constructing an environment in which risks were low. As with the findings of Edwards (1998), the conversations were student-performance, and curriculum, driven. There did not appear to be examples of cognitive dissonance through which the student teachers’ conceptions of learning and teaching would be challenged, but rather a sense of the mutual construction of a comfort zone from which mentor and student rarely ventured.

The evidence from the case study suggests that mentoring conversations, following lesson observations, do not encourage critical reflection on the broader aspects of learning and teaching, or on the curriculum. Student teachers’ views and beliefs concerning literacy remain unexamined or unchallenged by mentors, whose predominant focus is on observable performance rather than on examination of practice.

CHAPTER TWELVE

“We don’t want robots now”

(primary mentor in conversation December 2002)

Three inter-related themes were discussed in the first part of the dissertation:

- the professional development of novice teachers, and teacher professionalism.
- concepts of subject knowledge for teaching;
- concepts of subject knowledge in English.

These themes were then related to the role of the mentor in primary schools. This chapter reviews the findings from the case study in relation to questions that were raised by an examination of the literature. In so doing the chapter considers concepts of teacher professionalism that are implicitly held by mentors as they are evidenced in relation to student teachers’ subject knowledge in English.

Summary of the findings: subject knowledge and the professional development of student teachers

The majority of mentors interviewed defined subject knowledge firstly or solely in terms of content knowledge, and evidence from lesson observation forms indicates that references to content knowledge have a consistently high frequency. However, evidence from the interviews and documentary materials shows that the mentors in the case study implicitly distinguish between different forms of subject knowledge for teaching. They identify content or subject-matter knowledge, knowledge of curriculum materials, knowledge of teaching strategies or pedagogical approaches to the subject and related knowledge of learners, as constituent elements of subject knowledge. Their concepts can be compared with those of Shulman (1995), Banks et al., (1996) and Turner-Bissett (1999).

In common with the mentors interviewed by Maynard (1996), and the findings of Edwards and Protheroe (2003), the mentors do not place a high priority on subject knowledge in their discussions with student teachers and appear to take content or subject-matter knowledge for granted in later stages of student training. In discussions and on lesson observation forms, their comments focus increasingly on pedagogical

issues, related to effective learning, in common with the mentors in the research of Furlong and Maynard (1995:141):

how they (primary teachers) see and use subject matter knowledge is filtered by their understanding of children and how best they learn.

The mentors hold a developmental view of learning to teach in respect of undergraduate students. In their research into the views of mentors working with Articled Teachers, Elliot and Calderhead (1995:47-48) found that mentors viewed development in learning to teach mainly in terms of increasing independence in taking lessons:

There were scant references to any changes in novices' beliefs about teaching, their perspectives on children or how they thought about subject knowledge.

The mentors in this case study appear hold a more complex view than that described by Elliot and Calderhead. Progression in student teachers' professional learning is conceptualised as a shift from a focus on classroom management, exemplified in the 'tips' offered to first year undergraduates, towards a focus on the learning needs of children and how these can be met through the use of certain pedagogical strategies. This would imply a recognition of changes in student teachers' beliefs about teaching, although these are not made explicit in the evidence obtained for the case study. Mentors' concepts of stages of development in learning to teach, as evidenced by changes in emphasis in their written comments, appear in part to resemble the stages of student teacher development suggested by Furlong and Maynard (1995).

However, although mentors engage student teachers in moving beyond a plateau stage of teacher-centred performance, towards a greater awareness of the needs of learners, they do not engage students in a consideration of wider issues. Mentors' de-briefing conversations rarely touched upon issues beyond those concerned with the observed lesson or aspects of the student's placement within the school. On the occasions where the discussion ranged beyond this to considering the student's role as a teacher in a first post, the conversation was still situated within the boundaries of the requirements of the Literacy strategy. On no occasion did the mentors who agreed to

tape their de-briefing conversations open up the discussion to consider the broader questions concerning literacy teaching, nor did the mentors who were interviewed suggest that they would be likely to raise questions about broader purposes and values associated with literacy teaching in their discussions with student teachers. In one case, the mentor interviewed commented:

I suppose it's (i.e. discussion with students) very much context focused and perhaps it has to be, because there is so much for them to take on board. I don't think I'd expect them to become really value focused until they're confident with the content. (Interview with mentor Hazel, June 2003).

This was echoed in comments made by Rosemary in interview:

Rosemary: I think you know the NLS and the way I've worked with students has been very much structured by the NLS material, it's not a watered down version but it does structure what I do with them.

Interviewer: Do you experience that as a tension?

Rosemary: Um not so much because it's what we do in school. You know somebody coming to train then they need to be able to do what we do in school and that's just taken for granted really um but you know I don't see it as a tension but it's a lot to fit in with the brief moments I have...

(Interview with mentor Rosemary, June 2003.)

In these situations, reflection on practice is likely to become context-bound and more concerned with aspects of the performance of the student teacher, or the responses of individual pupils than with consideration of the purpose or value of the observed classroom activity. The evidence from mentors' taped conversations in the case study is thus generally consistent with the findings of Edwards and Protheroe (2003).

Given the prevailing focus in primary schools on target-setting and performance management, it is not surprising that primary mentors adopt the language and mindset of the appraiser or OfSTED inspector in discussing student teachers' performance. Nor is it surprising within this context, that there is an emphasis within mentoring conversations on curriculum delivery and meeting objectives within the specific

context of the classroom and the school. These tendencies have been re-inforced by the requirements of HEI to provide evidence of student achievement as part their own accountability procedures, and by the transference of a particular style of interaction with student teachers derived from previous models of ITET.

Summary of the findings: primary mentors' concepts of subject knowledge in English.

The case study evidence shows that primary mentors' views of subject knowledge in English, as expressed in the public domain, are largely circumscribed by the prescribed curriculum and pedagogical approaches laid down in the National Literacy Strategy *Framework for Teaching* (DfEE,1998b), and subsequent materials produced by the Strategy managers.

Those mentors who have entered the profession more recently appear to be more willing to accept the content and approaches of the NLS *Framework* at face value. However, the subject background and interest of mentors is also a significant factor, in terms of their beliefs about the subject of English. Those mentors who were most willing to accept the NLS *Framework* as a support for their own teaching and their work with student teachers were not those with a strong personal interest in English or literacy. Mentors with a stronger interest in English or literacy expressed some reservations about aspects of the NLS. However, these reservations were not expressed in their conversations with students, nor were the students encouraged to share their own beliefs or concerns about literacy teaching during the conversations. The increasing emphasis on questioning in mentors' written comments suggests that mentors' concepts of how children learn best are also be being re-shaped by the pedagogies promoted through the various Government initiatives. However, the theoretical orientations of mentors towards literacy learning foreground different emphases in their work with student teachers. Different interpretations of recommended pedagogies such as 'interactive teaching' are thus offered to student teachers.

As many teachers nationally appear to have conformed to the requirements of the NLS without necessarily fully understanding their purpose (Anderson et al., 2000, Frater, 2000: 109, Ofsted 2002:36), it is likely that some mentors working with

student teachers will fall into this category. The case study evidence suggests that, if mentors' own beliefs in the purposes and value of the subject are not engaged at a deeper level, their view of subject knowledge in English is more likely to be seen as one of delivery of the *Framework* objectives, and the pedagogical approaches they encourage may be those of transmission of information, and convergent questioning, rather than those which engage pupils in a meaning-led approach to texts and higher order thinking.

“Ambivalent, complex and contradictory”: the views of professionalism transmitted to student teachers through the mentoring process

The concepts of professionalism held by mentors in the case study, as they are evidenced through their conceptions of subject knowledge, appear to be contradictory in many respects. The mentor quoted at the head of this chapter said passionately “We don’t want robots now” as part of a discussion concerning the kinds of teacher the training process should aim to produce. This is assumed to mean she did not see student teachers who are merely “task managers” (Twiselton 2000) as desirable future professionals.

Evidence from the case study supports these views. Students are praised for researching their content knowledge; the ‘confidence’ this gives them is identified as evidence of secure subject knowledge. They are encouraged to be responsive to pupils’ needs and to support higher order thinking through the use of open questions. However, these qualities are situated within a culture of compliance with current policy directives. Students are also praised for being familiar with the requirements of the NLS Framework, for meeting the Framework objectives and for employing the pedagogical approaches recommended by the NLS.

Helsby (1995) characterised teachers’ responses to questions concerning teacher professionalism in two ways: that of ‘being a professional’ and that of ‘behaving professionally’. The mentors in the case study, like many of those in Helsby’s (1995) sample and Wright and Bottery’s (1997) research, appear to fall into the second category in terms of their implicit views of professionalism. Behaving professionally is of course, admirable and desirable and student teachers are rightly praised by their mentors for being hard-working, enthusiastic and able to accept constructive criticism

(comments on final year undergraduates at mentor meeting, June 2003). However, these qualities also come dangerously close to those identified by Hayes (1999b) as ‘being willing’. In some cases, the outcome of being willing to listen and learn from mentors involved “acceptance of the existing pedagogy, rather than shaping and refining their own ideas” (Hayes, 1999b: 74).

Student teachers’ positions in schools make them vulnerable to the prevailing culture (Haggarty, 1995, Edwards, 1997, Edwards, 1998, Edwards and Ogden, 1998, Hayes, 2001, Edwards and Protheroe, 2003) and more likely to accept the view of those within the school than of tutors working in HEI if conflicts of vision arise. Opportunities for the student teachers in the case study to explore their ideas and beliefs about English and literacy learning did not arise in the school context. Like the secondary mathematics students in Haggarty’s (1995) research, they appeared to acquiesce with their mentor’s views, and accept the version of school knowledge with which they were presented.

These “ambivalent, complex and contradictory” (Troman, 1996: 485) responses have not only applied to mentors in schools, for it has not only been mentors in schools who have been influenced by central Government initiatives. The policies and practice of the HEI have adapted to the requirements of ITT Circulars and the pressures of OfSTED inspections before and during the period of the research investigation. These have affected the ways in which mentors have conceptualised their role in working with students, as discussed in Chapter Eleven.

There are thus professional and strategic conflicts, in the current policy context, for ITET programmes that espouse the principles of reflective practice and that also rely significantly on the role of the mentor as an agent of professional development.

Implications for practice

Although not all primary ITET partnerships use the model of mentoring adopted in the case study partnership, the findings from the study are confirmed by the results of other recent research investigations in related areas such as those of Maynard (2000) and Edwards and Protheroe, (2003).

Teacher beliefs are an essential element of subject knowledge for teaching. Twiselton (2000, 2002) has shown how student teachers' belief systems about literacy teaching directly affect their sense of teacher identity and thus the nature of their interaction with pupils and their ability to scaffold pupils' learning. It thus seems important that student teachers are encouraged to articulate their own values and beliefs about education and about the subject areas they teach during the course of their initial training. While these may become refined in practice once students enter the profession as full time teachers, the habit of reflection on values and beliefs needs to be established, in addition to the reflection on action in the more limited context which is a familiar aspect of school experience.

It is unlikely and perhaps inappropriate, that student teachers will be engaging in the kind of systematic examination of practice that characterises the concept of the reflective teacher derived from Dewey (1933) or Stenhouse (1975). McIntyre (1993: 43) argues that reflection on practice in this sense has a limited value for novice teachers, because they do not have a repertoire of past experience on which they can draw. This does not mean, however, that he believes student teachers should not learn to reflect, but rather that they need support in developing "guided practice in the skills and habits of reflection" (McIntyre, 1993:44). Similarly, Furlong and Maynard (1995:189), discuss the need for student teachers to develop reflection on the "nature and quality of the educational experiences they are making available to their pupils" and eventually on the 'worthwhileness' of their teaching. In the current policy context, mentors in primary schools may not be fostering this form of reflection through guided practice.

The research investigation has raised the important question as to what are realistic and appropriate expectations of both mentors and student teachers during the normally relatively short period of a school experience placement. Much of the literature on mentoring assumes an underpinning model of the reflective teacher, and then proceeds to build a framework for mentoring which is intended to develop the capacity for reflective practice (for example: Fish, 1995, Furlong and Maynard, 1995). This view is not necessarily shared by the mentors in the case study, or in other

primary partnerships, in respect of reflection on subject knowledge (Williams and Soares, 2002).

The outcomes of my research investigation, and the recent work of other researchers (Edwards and Ogden, 1998, Maynard, 2000, Edwards and Protheroe, 2003), suggest that the expectation that mentors will engage student teachers in reflective discussion is not being met within the current climate in primary schools. It may be unrealistic to expect either student teachers or mentors to be able to enter into broader reflective discussion on curriculum issues within the current culture of primary mentoring, and a re-examination of the ways in which student teachers' experiences in schools are conceptualised, and organised in terms of professional learning, may be necessary (Maynard 2001, Edwards and Protheroe, 2003).

Mentors in the case study appear to believe that understanding how pupils learn is central to their concept of subject knowledge for teaching. This belief is more central to their concerns as teachers, and as mentors of student teachers, than their beliefs in the purposes of a given subject area. It emerges most clearly in mentors whose experience and background is in working with pupils in the early years of schooling, as might be expected, but is evident in mentor's comments in relation to all age groups within the primary years. This suggests that, despite the continued emphasis on subject-matter knowledge contained in policy documents, mentors place the learner, and not the subject, at the heart of their values. It is in this area that the possibility exists for bridging the gap between mentors' implicit values and the need to help students make their own values explicit.

Implications for the profession.

In what ways then, could practices be encouraged which might reduce pressures on student teachers to adopt a delivery model of the received curriculum, particularly in literacy, and which might encourage greater discussion about values and purposes in primary English education, in addition to greater generalisation from specific experience?

Dadds (2001:55) argues that the reforms of the last ten years have silenced the voices of teachers who need to be encouraged to participate in open reflection on pedagogical discourses and practices.

This necessitates an acceptance of constructive criticism on the part of policy makers, which has sometimes been absent in the past. Teachers, HEI tutors and representatives of government agencies require an atmosphere of mutual trust in order for open and honest dialogue.

There is a need for space, for a period of time without further large-scale national initiatives, in order for teachers to be able to accommodate to the changes brought about classroom practice through the introduction of the NLS. In the face of unrelenting pressures many teachers revert to 'tried and tested' methods (Desforges, 1995). English et al., (2002) have shown that greater opportunities to examine and come to appreciate the implications of the recommended pedagogical approaches in the NLS are required. Unless this space for professional accommodation is provided, many teachers are likely to continue to operate a technically oriented, curriculum delivery model of literacy teaching. There will be a consequent impact on student teachers' professional development, where this model is promoted within schools.

Arguments which suggest that reflection on the nature and purposes of subjects should be confined to HEI based learning, perpetuate a theory-practice divide in conceptions of learning to teach. Teachers' professional knowledge is constructed through the intersection of theory and practice (Banks et al., 1996). There is thus a need for research of different kinds to continue to investigate teachers' beliefs about subjects, how these beliefs affect classroom practice and how this relationship can be made explicit in interactions between primary mentors and student teachers.

More research is required into ways in which undergraduate students learn through school experience, such as that carried out by Twiselton (2000,2002). Much recent research has focused on the shorter PGCE programmes, but there may be differences in approaches to learning operating in both the student teachers themselves, and in mentors' expectation and engagements with students following these different

programmes. Similar investigation will be needed with trainees following work-based ITT programmes such as the Graduate Teacher Programme.

A further research investigation examining student teachers' conceptions of subject knowledge in English, developed through the course of an undergraduate ITET programme would complement the current case study, as suggested in Chapter Eight.

Further research into different forms of mentoring practices in primary schools would investigate the use of discourse structures and language patterns in relation to facilitating guided reflection on practice.

Collaborative research between mentors, HEI tutors and students would help to develop a culture of co-enquiry rather than perpetuate the teacher-pupil relationships that characterise some mentoring practices.

Working in these ways would enable the shared examination of and reflection on different mentoring practices, such as those noted in the case study: for example the distinctive approaches of mentors working with students in Foundation Stage classes.

The changing perspectives on primary literacy teaching now being presented by the NLS managers provide an opportunity to investigate the effects of a wider range of mentoring strategies in English. Mentors themselves will be the best advocates of changing practice to other mentors, within a partnership model of teacher education. Thus they should be encouraged to initiate, or participate in, school based research investigations aimed at strengthening the qualities of flexibility and independence in student teachers that they claim to already value.

The HEI within which I work provides a wide variety of routes into teaching and thus offers opportunities to conduct forms of comparative research such as those suggested above. I hope to establish a research group to link interested colleagues within the institution with mentors and teachers in partner schools in order to foster further investigation into these areas. I have also recently contributed to re-structured Masters' Level modules in mentoring with a view to supporting more school based investigation of mentoring practice.

Implications for my own professional practice.

As a researcher, I have become more aware of the role of group interviewing in supporting participants to articulate tacitly held knowledge or understanding, while avoiding leading questions from the interviewer. This is a research strategy I intend to use more consistently in my future work with both student teachers and mentors.

My role within the training partnership has meant that the case study has revealed aspects of HEI practice that require re-consideration. There are thus some specific recommendations for future action research that apply to my own HEI.

Such practices would include encouraging collaborative teaching between class teachers and experienced, rather than novice, student teachers. This would involve focused observation of more expert teaching as an element of intermediate and later stages of training, rather than being part of the early process of “learning to see” (Maynard and Furlong, 1995:82). Such practices would operate in addition to the more “traditional” forms of lesson observation and would serve to support discussions moving from the specific issues of an observed lesson towards more general principles.

An expanded range of student teachers’ experience, coupled with opportunities to discuss their experience and observation with more expert teachers requires an underpinning model of student teachers’ professional learning. Further professional development opportunities would need to be provided for mentors in order to explore these issues, including some of the barriers to student learning already identified in recent research.

These practices would need to be supported within HEI based teaching through discussion with student teachers in various forms, focusing on the nature of professional learning. These forms could include seminar sessions, response to student teachers’ journals maintained during periods of school experience and web-based discussion boards. The purpose would be to challenge the perception that learning to teach can only occur through “doing”, and by providing explicit opportunities for students to share and examine their own values and beliefs about English and literacy learning.

The role of HEI tutors who regularly visit schools would also require re-examination. Whitty points out that changes in staffing patterns in teacher education departments in HEI have meant that “the staff left in teacher education in higher education were often those whose skills were closest to those of school-based teachers” (Whitty, 2001: 7). Although Whitty sees this development as undermining the distinctive role of universities in teacher education, this common skills base could be seen as an advantage in the context of partnership where mentors and HEI tutors could work together to investigate different models of student teacher development.

I intend to disseminate my findings in a variety of ways, and have already begun to do this through giving conference papers at local and national level. I will also seek to publish the outcomes of this research investigation in appropriate professional journals. Finally, it is important to me that I should share some of the implications of my research within the training partnership that has formed the focus of the study in ways which are productive and which continue to develop professional practice. A number of mentor colleagues have already shown interest in some of my findings and have expressed a willingness to participate in future school based research. I am now producing support materials for mentors to develop student teachers’ focused observation of expert teaching. I hope to involve some of these colleagues in jointly writing up the results of this work for dissemination within the training partnership, and possibly beyond.

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APPENDICES

Appendix Ai.
HEI Lesson observation pro-forma.

SCHOOL EXPERIENCE ASSESSMENT

BA(QTS) Year 1, Year 2, Year 3, PGCE (Primary), PGCE Key Stage 2/3,
Registered/Graduate Teacher

Trainee's Name:..... School: Date:

Comments on Observed Lesson

Age Group: No in Class: Subject:

Focus of Observation:.....

Planning & Preparation *(including provision for pupils who are very able & those with Special Educational Needs)*

Teaching & Classroom Management *(including classroom environment, displays, relationships with pupils, organisation/control, management of LSAs and other adults)*

Quality of pupils' learning *(including how far objectives are met in observed lesson)*

Trainee's Subject knowledge and understanding *(including use of ICT)*

Appendix Aii.
HEI Notes of Guidance for lesson observation pro-forma.

GUIDANCE ON THE COMPLETION OF THE SCHOOL EXPERIENCE ASSESSMENT FORM

Please complete the top section of the form, including the course or year group to assist with the compilation of accurate records .

Focus of observation: At an early stage of training a general focus might be appropriate, but wherever possible the trainee’s targets should be used to agree on a focus for observation. This should not prevent the recording of comments on other issues.

Planning & Preparation: *This section applies to the observed session.*

- Are there clear, relevant lesson objectives, linked to NC POS or Early Learning goals? Is there evidence that previous assessment/evaluation has been used to support planning?
- Is there evidence of a planned introduction? Have key instructions & questions been identified? Will the planned work challenge and interest pupils appropriately?
- Is differentiation of work evident? Have any organisational issues been identified and planned for? Has a teaching focus group or individual students been identified? If other adults will be present, has their contribution been planned?
- Is there a planned conclusion which consolidates learning or experience? Has homework been planned, to consolidate learning (where appropriate)?
- Have opportunities for the use of ICT to support the learning been planned?
- Have relevant resources been identified and prepared ? Are resources produced of a high standard of presentation?
- Does the plan indicate which aspects of pupils’ achievement will be assessed, how this will be done, and by whom ? Does the plan indicate whether assessment will be of a group or the whole class?

Teaching & Classroom Management *This section applies to the observed session*

- Does the trainee motivate pupils and sustain their engagement in the lesson?
- Does the trainee maintain a safe and orderly learning environment?
- Does the trainee use instruction, explanation, demonstration and questioning appropriately to support pupil learning?
- Are lessons well paced to ensure effective learning?
- Does the trainee expect, establish and maintain high standards of work and behaviour?
- Does the trainee manage the work of LSAs and other adults appropriately? E.g. by ensuring they are appropriately briefed prior to the lesson?
- Has the trainee effectively utilised the classroom as a learning environment? E.g. through lively, interactive displays or through the establishment of focused learning areas?

Quality of Pupil Learning *This section applies to the observed session*

- To what extent are the intended objectives achieved in the lesson?
- Are pupils encouraged to assess their achievement of the objectives at a level appropriate to their age & ability?
- Do pupils sustain attention and interest in the lesson?
- Does the trainee listen to pupil responses and respond constructively to take learning forward?
- Are pupils encouraged to develop independence/co-operation/ perseverance/ personal pride in their work as appropriate within the lesson?

Trainees subject knowledge & understanding *This section applies to the observed session*

- Does the trainee demonstrate an understanding of the subject knowledge necessary to underpin effective teaching of the lesson?
- Can the trainee identify possible pupil misconceptions /errors which might arise, and have they planned to accommodate these?
- Does the trainee demonstrate an awareness of teaching strategies which are appropriate to the subject?
- If ICT has been used to support learning, has it been used appropriately to consolidate or extend pupils’ understanding of relevant aspects of the subject?

Appendix Bi.

Details of first group of mentors interviewed November-March 2000/2001

All names are fictional.

Mentor	Teaching experience	Mentoring experience (years)	Mentoring experience (No. of students)	Further mentoring qualifications	Subject specialism & age range taught at point of interview	School details	Subsequent information
Roz	25 years	4 years	10 – undergraduates, all years Reception & KS1	none	Early Years Yr R	Large urban Infant school	In teaching. Same school
Sandra	23 years	4 years	8 - undergraduates & PGCE both Key Stages	none	English ICT Yr 3	Large rural Primary	Part time teaching Same school
Gina	27 years	3 years	9 – undergraduates, all years, both Key Stages	Advanced Certificate in Mentoring	Science Geography SENCo Yr 5	Large suburban Primary school	Now supply teaching
Laura	14 years	5 years	Was member of ‘pilot mentoring group’ 12-15 students mainly undergraduates Year 2 & Year 3. KS2	MA module in mentoring with HEI	Mathematics. KS2	Large urban junior school	Now employed in HEI in ITET
Mike	10 years	1 year	7 undergraduates: four 1st years, three 2 nd years, both Key Stages	Currently doing Advanced Certificate in Mentoring	Music Yr 2	Large urban Primary school	In teaching. Taped Conversation December 2002
Kay	8 years	2 years	3 students: one 1st	Advanced	History	Medium	In teaching.

			year, one 2 nd year, one PGCE first placement Mentors in KS2 only	Certificate in Mentoring	RE Year 6	urban R.C. Primary	Moved schools, No longer mentoring
Carol	5 years	1 year	1 PGCE first placement Mentors in KS1 only	Currently doing Advanced Certificate in Mentoring	English Drama Technology Yr 2	Large rural Primary school	Now employed in HEI Foundation Degree Programme. No ITET involvement
Ellen	15 years	3 years	12 students, all years PGCE & undergraduate Both KS	MA module in mentoring with OU.	Mathematics Reception	Large suburban primary school	Now employed in HEI In ITET
Susie.	8 years	2 years	3 undergraduates: two 1st Years, one 2 nd year Mentors within age range of school (4-9)	None, but doing M.A. course	Trained for KS1 Year 3	Large urban First School 4-9 range	In teaching. Taped conversation June 2003
Jane	4 years	2 years	4 - 3 2 nd Years, 1 1 st year Mentors in KS2	Advanced Certificate in Mentoring	Geography Year 4	Large urban Primary school	Maternity leave. No longer mentoring

Appendix : Bii.

Interview guide: first interview series.

Introduction: Key points

- Explanation of purpose of research as researching mentors' conceptions of subject knowledge/ emphasise not connected to formal role with HEI.
- Permission to tape record
- Access to transcript

Biographical information

- Length of time teaching & range of experience in terms of types of schools etc.
- Length of time as a mentor
- Experience as a mentor – number of students, key stage focus
- Original subject specialism in training, if any
- Current responsibility in school other than as a mentor
- Any recent CPD – esp award bearing courses.

Use of lesson observation form

Remind subject of Subject Knowledge & Understanding section of observation form.

- Can you recall any occasion when you recorded a comment about subject knowledge before we introduced these new forms?
- Has using these new forms encouraged you to focus more on subject knowledge issues?
- What sort of evidence do you draw on when you make your judgements about students' subject knowledge?
 - If necessary, probe whether mentor considers pedagogical issues as related to subject knowledge.
- Where do you think you have gained your views about subject

Knowledge from?

- Specifically ask about English if example not given.
- Ask about NLS if not already mentioned

Use of de-briefing discussion

- How much do you think you talk about subject knowledge in the discussion after a lesson observation?
- Could you give me an example from an English or literacy lesson?

Students' professional development

- As a mentor, how important is the student's subject knowledge to you in your work with them?
- Do you have different expectations of students at different stages of training in terms of their subject knowledge?

Finally

- Thanks very much – any questions about the research process or anything you wish to add to discussion?
- Re-iterate opportunity for access to transcript
- Anonymity in case of publication & opportunity to view text prior to publication.

Appendix Biii.

Extracts from interviews with first mentor group.

Annotated to show how themes emerged in interviews which related to themes emerging from written comments on lesson observation forms.

Mentor names are fictionalised.

Annotations use same format as that finally used for written comments: numbers relate to themes finally identified, as below. Underlined sections may relate to interview questions/research questions(RQ) as well as to themes. Other extracts from interviews are provided in main text.

1.	generic reference to “subject knowledge & understanding”
2.	“knowing what you are teaching”
3	reference to subject knowledge as evident in plans/ lesson objectives/knowing what you wanted the children to learn
4	being able to “get it across”
5	advice about lesson content or management
6	reference to pupil difficulties or misconceptions
7	specific reference to the NLS/ELG/NC
8	reference to pupils’ needs as learners
9	reference to use of teaching strategies
10	‘confidence’

1: Mentor “Roz”

Interviewer: You’ve talked about confidence, about knowing, researching, you’ve talked about focus in writing objectives and assessment. Is there any other kind of evidence that you might draw on (to identify students’ subject knowledge)?

Roz: No when I’m at the planning meeting with the student who’s been working in my year group team if they contribute something I realise they’ve clicked They’ve understood what they’re doing if they contribute something that’s relevant and will get the message across to the children⁴ then I realise that they they’re in the right sort of frame of mind.

Later in interview

Interviewer: You've given me examples from science, you've given me examples from RE - what would constitute subject knowledge...or examples of subject knowledge in English?

Roz: The fact that they realise what speaking & listening the child should be doing at that stage, the expectation they had⁸; what they realized about the development of writing and spelling²; how they tackled reading⁹, how they tackled hearing reading⁹, the sort of advice, the way they shared it with the child the ideas they had for doing it⁹ things like reading big books and what they can get from it. I've watched them do that, they're all learning, very much so at this stage – it's interesting. I've always thought it's easy to read a story till you hear someone doing it not very well and then you realize what a skills it is. Its trying to make them realize that each child is different in its skills and knowledge and what its already got⁸.

2. Mentor "Kay"

(A Year 1 student is being discussed)

Interviewer: What are you writing this time (in the appropriate section of the lesson observation form)?

Kay: That her subject knowledge wasn't sound enough¹ –she wasn't using the right vocabulary². I felt that one should use (that) with the top juniors & that really either she should have asked me or done a little bit of research² before she taught the lesson. I explained to that you know I had to do some work on Shakespeare so I spent the summer reading up on Shakespeare. I was trying to get across to her that even experienced teachers have to do this².

Interviewer: You've talked a lot about vocabulary (K nods & says mmm in agreement) – obviously that's one of your main evidence sources (K yes) for saying (K yes) whether you think a student's subject knowledge is sound. If they're not using

appropriate vocabulary. What other evidence? You've said spelling, you've said vocabulary...

Later in same interview

Interviewer: What else has influenced your thinking about subject knowledge? You've come to realise it's significant. Do you think that the national strategies have made any difference to make you aware?

Kay: I think they have⁷, definitely. They've made you more aware of subject knowledge and they've informed you more of the knowledge(RQ) as well if you didn't know it beforehand. Like what a polygon is...

Interviewer: So you've found them supportive?

Kay: Yes, Yes I have

Interviewer: If we stick to the Literacy Strategy now – are you comfortable with the view of subject knowledge that's there in the Strategy?

Kay: Yes I am, I am comfortable with it – I am. There is vocabulary (I know it's not just vocabulary) it's there for me. I can look it up. If I'm not sure how to teach it, I can look at the book which tells me. (RQ) I can get assessment ideas. I am ...I must say I like the Strategy. I like the Literacy Strategy. A little bit too prescriptive possibly(RQ).

3. Mentor "Gina".

Gina: I'm fairly upfront with students you can be nice to a certain extent but I kind of – I bite the bullet (Yes) and I will say 'I really don't think um that's quite the ticket you know⁵ and think why and say you know how can you even think about stretching

your able children when they will rumble you're not confident yourself¹⁰ – um and if you don't know how to do it, find out find out, find out² – you have to do your homework you can't wing it and I just say this is a fantastic opportunity to find out how –

Interviewer: You said 'How to do it?' so that doesn't just mean 'knowledge' knowledge (Yes) What else does it mean?

Gina: How to deliver⁹ and how – I suppose how to convey the fact that you know and you know what you want from the children because its also translating knowledge. To be a reflective teacher you have to have the knowledge but you also have to transpose it⁴ (Right) own it (Yes) and transpose it and match to the needs of your audience⁸. So – subject knowledge is useless- is useless on its own, without the means with which someone else can learn from it.(RQ)

Appendix Ci.
Details of second group of mentors interviewed.

All names are fictional.

All members of the second group taped mentoring conversations with student teachers. “Hazel” subsequently found that the tape recorder had not worked properly, so this recording was not available.

An interview was arranged and begun with a sixth mentor. The interview was interrupted by a school crisis part way through and it did not prove possible to return to the school to complete it, as it had been arranged close to the end of the research investigation.

Mentor	Teaching experience	Mentoring experience (years)	Mentoring experience (No. of students)	Further mentoring qualifications	Subject specialism & age range taught at point of interview	School details
Ruth	10 years in 2 schools	7 years	Hard to remember, must be in excess of 20 students in both key stages	Advanced Certificate in Mentoring	Special needs. Second Deputy Head No class responsibility	Large Primary school age range 4-9 years.
Nick	11 years in 1 school	5 years	12 student approximately in both key stages	Advanced Certificate in Mentoring	Science co-ordinator Key stage 2 class	Urban primary school
Hazel	6 years in 2 schools	2 years	4 students in both key stages	None	English co-ordinator Deputy Head Key stage 2 class	Large primary school in “commuter” village setting
Keith	33 years in 4 schools	7 years with current HEI	Approximately 20 students with current HEI, all in key stage 2 Was also ‘teacher tutor’ for another HEI. Have	None	Mathematics co-ordinator ‘Leading Mathematics teacher’ Deputy Head	Suburban Junior school

			worked with HEIs in different ways since 1974.		Key stage 2 class	
Mary	28 years in 3 schools	4 years	Three or four students every year – all in key stage 2.	None	Music co-ordinator Year 5 co-ordinator Responsible for all work experience placements in school. Key stage 2 class (Year 5)	Suburban Junior school

Appendix : Cii.

Interview guide: second interview series.

Introduction: Key points

- Explanation of purpose of research as researching mentors' conceptions of subject knowledge/ emphasise not connected to formal role with HEI.
- Permission to tape record
- Access to transcript

Biographical information

- Length of time teaching & range of experience in terms of types of schools etc.
- Length of time as a mentor
- Experience as a mentor – number of students, key stage focus
- Original subject specialism in training, if any
- Current responsibility in school other than as a mentor
- Any recent CPD – esp award bearing courses.

Views about English

Use either interviewees' reponse to post-conference questionnaire or biographical information to introduce topic.

- What does the subject of English mean to you.
 - What do you think "English" is?

Subject knowledge in mentoring conversations

- What issues concerning subject knowledge do you tend to raise in discussions?
 - Specifically in relation to English?

Use of lesson observation form

- What do you tend to write down on the lesson observation form?
 - Why do you write what you do?
- What sort of evidence do you draw on when you make your

judgements about students' subject knowledge?

Changing perceptions of subject knowledge

- Do you think your views about subject knowledge have changed over the past three or four years?
 - How influential has the NLS been?
 - Have there been other influences on your thinking?

During my research I have seen some changes in emphasis in what mentors write on lesson observation forms (shift from content orientation to pedagogical orientation).

- How would you explain this development?

Finally

- Thanks very much – any questions about the research process or anything you wish to add to discussion?
- Re-iterate opportunity for access to transcript
- Anonymity in case of publication & opportunity to view text prior to publication.

Appendix Ciii.

Extracts from interviews with second mentor group

1. Mentor Nick

Nick: Obviously there's vocabulary² but if there's a certain objective⁷ having modelled that accurately⁹, has it been repeated in a different way, which is also accurate, so that whole modelling thing would be the first one I think (right).

Interviewer: Why would you see that as subject knowledge?

Nick: Because they have to have sound subject knowledge in what they're teaching before they deliver it towards the pupils. (*RQ transmission?*)

Interviewer: So if I'm understanding what you say correctly, you've got to have your own understanding of the content, but you've also got to make that content work for the pupils and that's the modelling process in whatever subject area (Yes)

Nick: The other two things I was thinking about with subject knowledge would be whether it came from the right place from the Literacy Strategy⁷ they've used it from there and the next thing would be, they've gained it from the Strategy, they've modelled it, and then what the children do in their groups relates to it. Now it is subject knowledge but its closely related to classroom management and so the knowledge they've got is it actually being tackled in the group so they're not just going through a process but they're actually tackling that specific thing

2. Mentor Hazel

Interviewer: So that from your perspective as an English specialist? (Subject knowledge would be) Breadth of knowledge of genre and breadth of knowledge of suitable texts?

Hazel: Certainly that would be one of the things I have commented on in the past² and also their own subject knowledge of grammar² has come up (right) you know (yes) – not only with students but also with NQTs as well

Hazel: In my own training I remember there being very little focus on those it was very much a textual focus er but from my own point of view er I know it's very important that we should teach children the mechanics and things that make up the English language so I think I still would have had a reasonable focus.

Interviewer: and that's a personal value?

Hazel: Yes it is, yes.

Interviewer: Why? If you can..it's hard to unpick one's own values but why for you is technical competence essential?

Hazel: Because I think that it is all those things that make up the English language and for me it's important that we keep that enormous breadth that we have and that we don't lose English to something that's extremely narrow. I would hate to see us all texting or e-mail.. You know um I'm very fascinated by the history of the English language and the way it keeps changing and er I think we need to continue with that but not lose the ??? we have. So it's important that we do focus on the aspects of it.

Interviewer :Did the NLS come as a welcome initiative for you?

Hazel: No (laughs)

Interviewer Because?

Hazel: Because I thought I was quite good at teaching English and it started telling me that I had to do things in certain ways.

3. Mentor Rosemary

Interviewer: Do you think your background makes a difference to how you think about English?

Rosemary: I think that from, when I first qualified as a teacher I did the PGCE route and I was always very aware how, because it wasn't my subject specialism, how important (it is) because I view English as a communication medium So I was always very keen even before the NLS came, to structure how I would teach literacy language and communication so from the very early stages as an NQT, as it was, I built my own structure about how to teach English and I was very cross when the NLS came out after I'd spent a year with my literacy co-ordinator doing my own scheme.-

Interviewer Can we get that balance (between technical correctness & enjoyment) do you think with children at the moment?

Rosemary: We haven't got there yet, nowhere near we have got there. I'm helping to head up Year 2 and we're just going through the SATs. When I sit and watch a group of Yr 2 children going through the SATs process it doesn't matter how much we say we're writing a story, enjoy it. They're still worried about – every time I ask a class what makes a good story 9 times out of 10 it'll be a hand up and say 'put your capital letters and full stops in' and that's where I think we're failing children.

4. Mentor Mary

Do they understand where they're coming from? Do they understand the basics of English – yes you do need grammar, you do need the structure of English, you need how do you construct a sentence – the vocabulary, are they encouraging the use of vocabulary? and then the creative knowledge. How do you get that child to get the creative knowledge in – you know, the vocabulary, the way they encourage vocabulary. That's going to be their subject knowledge, so you've got the technical

side, the creative side – that's the tool to do the job. To me that's really important – to get that creativity going.

5. Mentor Keith

Keith: That they weren't just teaching but they understand with at least some depth what they were trying to teach and why they were required to teach it.

Interviewer: How would you know that understanding was in depth? How would you find that out?

Keith: Through the quality of the direct teaching so observing the student teach – the teacher focused element. so it's if the student doesn't understand what they're teaching and they're paying lip service to the lesson because it happens to occur in a run of lessons....The other main thing I would look for is some sort of sparkle of creativity in the activities that are part of the lesson

Interviewer: And that's subject knowledge as well?

Keith: Yes because for sure the two have got to match up.

Interviewer: Why would the spark of creativity or imagination in developing the content be subject knowledge for you? What makes that subject knowledge?

Keith: I'm not sure if I'm going to give you the answer to your question but – it's far more enabling for children to be proactive in their learning it's likely to interest and stimulate them and they're likely to have ways of discovering the knowledge we want them to have at the end of the lesson.

Appendix Di.
Details of student groups interviewed May/June 2003.

I had intended to interview Year 3 students at the end of their placements in the summer term. In 2001 there was insufficient time available between the end of their placement and the end of term for this to be possible.

In summer 2002 the same time constraint was present, and I was then called away from the HEI due to other professional responsibilities at the critical time.

All interviews took place during May and June 2003. At this time I had no direct involvement with the placement of students in schools, or their assessment, I considered this to be the only ethically appropriate time to conduct these interviews.

Three groups of undergraduate Year 2 students.

Group 1

2 female both 3-7 age phase.

Group 2

2 female 3-7 and 7-11 phase, 1 male 7-11 phase

Group 3

2 female 3-7 and 7-11 phase.

Three groups of fourth year (subject specialist) students

Group 1

1 female English specialist –7-11; 1 male –SEN specialist 7-11

Group 2

2 female Maths specialist 7-11, Art specialist 3-7.

Group 3

3 female 3-7 , 2 Early Years specialists, 1 SEN specialist.

One group of 3 NQTS all in same large Junior school, each in different year groups.

Appendix Dii.

Interview guide.

Explain purpose of research project, use of tape recorder, anonymity, access to transcripts & any subsequent publication.

- We have a lesson observation form with different headings. Can you remember any discussion you have had with any of your mentors in relation to the Subject Knowledge and Understanding Heading?
- Can you give me any examples from English/literacy?
- How was your discussion with your mentor carried out?
- ie. were you able to make the points you wanted to make?
- Who did most of the talking?
- What other opportunities have you had to discuss English/literacy while in school, (apart from specific planning discussions with your class teacher) ?
- Did what you learned in College match with what you were expected to know in school?
- Do you see the NLS as becoming more flexible in schools? (Year 4/NQTs only)

Appendix Diii.
Extracts from interviews.

Year 4: Group 2.

1. There was a lot sort of about my classroom management but I don't really recall much about the subject knowledge

2. My second year placement they just sort of assumed that I knew it and that was it

(This year) they're starting to go back to doing topic work not the LH at the school I was at.

Interviewer: Which did you prefer?

2. I think I need to have a set structure, Lit isn't my strongest subject and I think if I could just chose what I wanted to do I'd pick the more drama side of things & the creative side and I possible won't look at the...

1. think the Literacy Hour goes too much into depth – do the children really need to know how the words work and everything I think it's more about enjoying the text...

Interviewer: so is English about being imaginative, being creative?

mmmm(agreement)

1. They don't seem to do creative writing any more

Interviewer: And you would like to see that back?

1. Yeah because they don't they don't seem to have any imagination any more

Interviewer: Have you always felt that or it is something you've felt more strongly this year?

1 .I think this year – I've seen the progress of the Literacy Strategy and I've seen that it doesn't work for everyone. It is important that they learn how to write. But I think they've lost all their imagination.

Participant 2's response in main text.

Year 4 students. Group 1

1. I remember discussing more general things rather than specific things related to English teaching.

So although it was an English lesson that was observed?

1. Yes and that was kind of general for whatever subject

So general planning general class management?

1. Yes rather than “to improve the way you did that text level, met that text level objective you could have done it like this” It was more “you could have handed out books like this”

And was that true of all your placements?

1. Um I think so to my knowledge I think so yes

2. I remember particularly one lesson D picked up on modelling and saying that modelling would have been an easy way to introduce it all and needed to be done more to allow children to understand what they were doing particularly for that lesson but generally again I can't remember specific conversations other than that one.

What about the subject knowledge section of the form?

2. Generally they just sort of said Oh your knowledge seems sound you knew what you were doing

How do you think they knew that?

1. It was just on that one lesson wasn't it? As long as you could stand there and didn't make a big mistake in what you were teaching then I suppose..

Have you got any idea what they might have been looking for in order to say your subject knowledge seemed OK?

1 Confidence, you showing your confidence so you know what you're talking about

2. Making sure that when you're discussing the aspects of the objective you're explaining so they know you know what you're talking about so the children understand.

So it isn't just knowing it?

2. Of course the evidence they have when they're watching you is how you explain it to the children

1 Applying what you know.

Is that what SK in English is for you?

1 My answer would probably be different to R's because I've done English in my fourth year. And so I see it as not only understanding grammar punctuation but knowing how children go about learning how to read, knowing about how speaking and listening can be used across the curriculum so that's more about how children learn

2. Yes

You've done SEN so what would you say SK in English is?

2 If you're asking me I'd say sentence formation and grammar and things like that, but when I started to say about these things, I know it and I would use it but I wouldn't necessarily associate that with subject knowledge. That I would imagine being more knowing how to use...

Have you heard people talking generally about English of Literacy outside the classroom?

2. When it was new people were talking about it and saying it was the government telling them what to do, almost sort of not knowing what they were doing

1. And perhaps some teachers would discuss the problems of children only having 20 minutes and the teacher sitting with the guided reading group which meant that the other children had to work independently

2 and also finding extra time outside Literacy to see the other bits of English

More recently then? Have they stopped talking about it?

1. They've been talking about SATs

2 yes and a lot about improving writing

So people have accepted the basic idea of the Literacy Strategy?

2 Yes

1. sometimes I feel like I don't know any different when I went into teaching practice it was there and sometimes I think well what was it like before I remember my own experiences of having English as a child and I certainly think it's improved because of well I reckon I've got gaps in my knowledge, well not now but I did have – maybe I wasn't listening but...

2 I know when we first started it was all about diphthongs and split vowel digraphs and I'd never heard those before and now I've seen children and they can say it that's a diphthong

1 And they're using the language and they're understanding it

Appendix Ei.

Example of letter sent to mentors.

107 Sandwich Road, Cliffsend, Ramsgate, CT12 5JA. Tel 01843 597891.

A request from Viv Wilson from Canterbury Christ Church University College for assistance with a personal research project.

10th May 2003

Dear _____,

I am writing to ask if either or both of you would be willing to assist with a research investigation which is part of the work for my Doctorate in Education.

During the past year I have been asking mentors working with students on teaching practice to tape record the feedback conversation they have with their student(s) following observation of an English/ Literacy lesson. I am now writing to a cross-section of mentors, working in different school settings, and with students working with pupils of various ages to obtain recordings of conversations between final placement students and their mentors.

If you have not already completed an observation of English by the time you receive this letter, would you be willing to assist with my research?

All that is required is for you to keep a tape recorder running during your feedback session with your student(s) and for you to ensure that the student is willing to participate in the recording. Please feel free to show this letter to the student if she or he has any anxieties – I have deliberately not written on College headed paper to indicate that this project has no relationship with any aspect of the College's procedures for assessment of school experience. I am on study leave this term and have no personal involvement with the assessment or examination of any final placement students.

All participants in the research investigation will be anonymised, and your permission would be sought if any part of my work involving this investigation were to be published once my Doctoral thesis is completed.

I appreciate that you may not feel that participating in this research is appropriate, either for yourself or the student with whom you are working, but I would be grateful if you could telephone me either at my home number above, or at the College on 01227 782258, or e-mail me at v.r.wilson@cant.ac.uk, to let me know whether or not you will be able to participate. I need to know how many people are likely to be involved in order to contact more colleagues in school if necessary. I hope this will not cause you too much inconvenience.

Yours sincerely,

Viv Wilson

Head of Schools Partnership, writing in a personal capacity.

Appendix Eii.

Example of mentor's negative reply .

15/5/03

Dear Viv,

Thank-you for your letter requesting assistance with your research project. I have discussed the matter with my student and she would prefer not to take part in a taped interview session.

May I wish you every success with your project.

Yours sincerely,

Appendix Eiii.
Summary of tape recorded conversations between mentors and student teachers.

All names are fictionalised.

Mentor name	Student details & date	Was conversation structured by HEI form?	Are there explicit references to student's subject knowledge	Other notes	Was mentor part of either interview group?
Mike	PGCE December 2001	No	No	Emphasis on delivering objectives	Yes Group 1
Elaine	PGCE December 2001	No	No	Emphasis on class management	No
Nick	Year 2 undergraduate November 2001	Yes	Yes	See appendix Eiv	Yes Group 2
Keith	Year 3 undergraduate June 2002	Yes	Yes	See appendix Eiv	Yes Group 2
Ann	Year 3 undergraduate June 2002	Yes	Yes	See appendix Eiv	No
Mary	Year 3 undergraduate June 2002	Yes	Yes	See appendix Eiv	Yes Group 2
Jenny	PGCE December 2002	No	Yes	Your subject knowledge was fine.	No. Retired December 2002
Louise	Year 2 undergraduate November 2002	No	No	Professional knowledge characterised as	Moved school December 2002

				knowing where to go next to help pupils make progress	
Beryl	PGCE December 2002				Subject of pilot interviews
Rosemary	PGCE December 2002	Yes	Yes	See appendix Eiv	Yes Group 2
Linda	Year 3 undergraduate June 2003	No	No		No
Julie	Year 3 undergraduate June 2003	No	Yes	Personal – ability to write on white board	No
Val	Year 3 undergraduate June 2003	No, but mentor reviews form at end of conversation	Not explicitly. Comment on form raised in conversation but not identified as subject knowledge.	Making links with other curriculum areas	No
Susie	Year 3 undergraduate June 2003	Yes	Yes	Personal literacy –use of apostrophe	Yes Group 1
Hazel	Tape damaged during recording				Yes Group 2

It is very noticeable that three out of the four tapes where mentors discuss subject knowledge specifically occur during the period of the HEI Ofsted inspection.

Appendix Eiv.
Extracts from taped conversations:
student teachers' subject knowledge.

1.

You use the OHP appropriately, with no other ICT use in there; your vocabulary was good. All the technical words, debate, tense, emotive language, rhetorical questions, summarise - you know, it's hard to believe now that we're using all of this kind of language with a Year 5 group, but they could use the language appropriately when they needed to and so could you, so I was quite happy with that.

Keith, Year 3 student, KS2 class. June 2002.

Here the mentor characterises subject knowledge as exemplified by the use of 'technical vocabulary' by the student but also by the pupils. Earlier in the investigation mentors seemed to be latching on to the use of the 'NLS vocabulary' as an indicator of subject knowledge in itself and some mentors still appear to be doing this. In this instance, however the mentor is also identifying the students' ability to share this language effectively with pupils as an aspect of subject knowledge. I suggest that this conceptualisation approaches that of Shulman's pedagogical content knowledge, albeit it in a very limited context.

On the lesson observation form, under the Subject Knowledge & Understanding heading, the mentor wrote:

"Your vocabulary is good with all technical words correctly used e.g. debate; tense; emotive language; rhetorical questions, summarise etc.

2.

Moving on to your subject knowledge, I've written here that your subject knowledge concerning what a verb is, was clear and was portrayed to the children so I didn't feel... go on.

The definition I gave them was from the NLS as so I was I felt you know it was more my sort of level of definition, so that's why I explained to them it's a doing word, an action something you do a verb is and you know, just asking them for examples

I thought that was good. And the temptation you see for a less experienced or less developed teacher would be to say a verb is a doing word but a verb is more than that and so because you've referred back to the National Literacy Strategy and used it helped, and I noticed in the teaching there was a precision in which you were correcting or commenting on them because your definition was quite clear

Nick Year 2 undergraduate KS 2 class. November 2001.

Another example of 'technical competence' this time additionally characterised as subject knowledge in terms of the student's ability to 'portray' the concept to the children and to intervene to correct misconceptions. These elements are also part of Shulman's pedagogical content knowledge

3.

You encouraged them really well to draw their own ideas out of them. You kept on pulling the similes out of them all the time, which I thought was really good. Well done. You know they said something and you said well it's like so and so and they came with it. You're also, you're also very intuitive I think because you can pick up ideas that the children, things that they say like when you were walking round and someone said something in the bit where they were writing and you said oh do you know what that is (yeah) and you expanded it so that is very much, you know, picking up on their ideas and really very good.

Mary Year 3 undergraduate, Summer 2002. Year 4 class

This mentor's conception of subject knowledge appears to revolve around the notion of scaffolding pupils' learning. I find the use of metaphorical language here fascinating in terms of physicality: drawing or pulling things out and picking things up. Mentor M is using the HEI observation form to structure her feedback and the reference to intuition is particularly interesting when located in this part of the de-briefing conversation, which purports to focus on subject knowledge. Qualities such as intuition, knowing when to intervene in pupils' learning, are qualities ascribed to "expert" as opposed to "novice" teachers.*

On the lesson observation form, under the Subject Knowledge & Understanding heading, the mentor wrote:

“Good knowledge of subject. Could you have used ICT to make text larger? Encouraged children with your own ideas. Drew them back to similes continually. Well done. Intuitive. You pick things up children say and expand/explain them.”

4.

Obviously your subject knowledge was good of both the Foundation Stage and the national curriculum and again the objectives were well linked together and the use of IT was clearly planned for and reinforced the reading skills which was very good.

Ann, Year 3 student. Foundation Stage/Year 1 class. Summer 2002.

Here the mentor's conception of subject knowledge appears to be expressed in terms of given curricula. However, evidence from interviews with some mentors indicates that 'knowledge of the Foundation Stage' can also be seen as standing for the broader understanding of how young children learn. These two themes both occur frequently in mentors' written comments.

On the lesson observation form, under the Subject Knowledge & Understanding heading, the mentor wrote:

“Good knowledge & clear understanding of NC, Lo's & ELG's which are all linked”.

5.

Your subject knowledge. Now you understand that very clearly. Now your strength, your specialist subject is science isn't it? (Yes) so how do you tackle your subject knowledge? How do you tackle the Literacy?

How do I go back and find things out? I usually start off, I go back to the National Literacy Strategy and, erm, I have the curriculum so I need to work out what I'm exactly doing and when I've worked out what I need to know. I went to the “Writing Book” because I'm doing writing....

I'm pleased you use the “Grammar for Writing at KS2” book because that's something we use at school.

Rosemary. PGCE first placement Autumn 2002

On the lesson observation form, under the Subject Knowledge & Understanding heading, the mentor wrote:

Excellent vocabulary sheets and guided writing frames provided for work on Christmas story.

Mentor and student continue to co-construct a conception of subject knowledge which is content driven and derived mainly from documents developed for the delivery of the National Literacy Strategy. Although the mentor later points out to the student that the school had adapted the Strategy to suit the pupils, this appears to mean that the curriculum has been abridged rather than extended. In other parts of the de-briefing session, however, Mentor R appears more able to support the student in generalising from the specific and reflecting on her own learning. Mention of the vocabulary sheets and guided writing frame is made earlier in the discussion, under the heading of Planning and Preparation, and is not referred to during the later section on subject knowledge. In consequence, it is not easy to tell whether the mentor sees this as a specific aspect of subject knowledge.

6.

General English subject knowledge – I'll just comment on that. It's important now to get accurate in all areas of your public writing, for example handwriting style- (discussion about need to use school handwriting style). And use of apostrophes – there were occasions when you needed to use apostrophes and to be honest, you didn't use them absolutely accurately (no –embarrassed?). Whilst you could argue Year 2 wouldn't maybe notice, it doesn't matter (no) because to my mind as a teacher of English you need to be as accurate as possible, and the way to do that is to go and probably find a kids book like Nelson Grammar which has got apostrophe s. so you can get you head round... (mentor gives examples - direct instruction).

What about the English and maths tests, have you taken those yet?

Yes. I was always really nervous about my maths so I kept putting it off but I passed my English first time.

Excellent. So really it's about a matter of pride then, being accurate and I get the impression that you want to do this very well and you want to be accurate and good. So I hope you don't mind my writing that.(No not at all)

It needs to be recorded so you will then come back and think oh yes I remember.

OK?

Susie with Year 3 student June 2003.

In this example, the emphasis is on the public face of subject knowledge, with an implied view of professionalism connected with being accurate. Note also the reference to the national tests –Susie sees these as relating to subject knowledge and as validating it.

Appendix F.

Example of initial cut and paste method used to analyse mentors' written lesson observation forms.

The source of the materials was identified by school and school year group. This column has been deleted for ethical reasons.

Neutral	Structure	Planning	Content	Pupil learning	ICT
You had a clear understanding of the work that you were teaching the class.					ICT programme arranged for more able group
			You showed the subject knowledge necessary in this subject and handled questions about most important characters and sub-plots well.		ICT was used to support learning & was evident in planning
			Be careful of spellings. Perhaps you could prepare a list of words for the subject/session ready to help you.		

You showed sound subject knowledge. You knew what you wanted to achieve and were able to build on previously acquired knowledge			In the booklet your choice of words stop and skip were inappropriate since a doubling of letters was required before the ed ending was added		Could you have used the class computer as a form of recording -ed words found in books with a pair of children?
	Well done for trying a Literacy Hour		Don't get caught up in all the many teaching points. Just keep it as simple and manageable as possible	Don't overload yourself or the children	
				Actions were used to prevent misconceptions – all very good	ICT shown on planning and used during lessons
				Understanding of misconceptions was good. You anticipated the use of different tenses and guided pupils towards the correct tense.	ICT not in use

Appendix G.

Re-analysis of mentors' written comments to identify themes, supported by evidence from interviews with first group of mentors.

"Knowing how to put it across" sometimes expressed in terms of clear explanations or effective questioning skills e.g

"X had obviously taken considerable time to select and provide relevant material for the children and was able to put the concept of an adjective across to the class at a level they could understand" (Year 2 undergraduate November 2000 KS 1 class)

"X has a good understanding of the subject by the way she responds to the children and encourages them through questioning" (Year 2 undergraduate November 2000 KS2 class)

Mentor R also uses the phrase "knowing how to put it across" as one of her components of subject knowledge

"Knowing what you wanted the children to learn"

e.g " You showed sound subject knowledge. You knew what you wanted to achieve and were able to build on previously acquired knowledge" (Year 2 undergraduate November 2000 KS2 class)

" You obviously knew what you wanted the children to learn and expressed yourself clearly" (PGCE December 2000 KS2 class)

Mentors K, and J placed the writing of clear objectives high on their list of evidence for identifying students' subject knowledge

"Having a clear understanding of the work you were teaching" – sometimes with specific examples such as spelling rules, prefixes, relevant texts and appropriate use of subject specific vocabulary. The specific examples all relate to elements of the National Literacy Strategy. There were a significant number of comments that relate to this theme, which corresponds to the first bullet point in the College guidance. There were noticeably fewer comments such as " Sound subject knowledge shown" with no further elaboration than in the previous year (1999/2000).

e.g. “You had a clear understanding of the work you were teaching the class” (Year 2 undergraduate November 2000 KS2 class)

“ Good knowledge of words spelt with different meanings” (Year 2 undergraduate November 2000 KS1 class)

“Good knowledge again of prefixes, antonyms, technical English skills, poetry forms”

(PGCE December 2000 KS2 class)_

Mentor S has found the content of the National Literacy Strategy very helpful to her in identifying components of English subject knowledge.

Comments about subject specific vocabulary occur fairly frequently.

Mentor K refers to the use of correct, subject related vocabulary as one of her indicators for a student’s subject knowledge.

Awareness of the needs of the pupils

e.g “ Knew various levels of the children and pitched questions accordingly” (PGCE December 2000 KS1 class)_

“X is well aware of the children’s needs and showed she understood the Early Learning Goals and how to build on children’s previous experiences” (Year 2 undergraduate November 2000 KS1 class)

Mentor R talks extensively about knowing the children and what they need at an early stage of learning as being crucial to subject knowledge.

All examples within this category come from KS1 class observations. Mentor R is an Early Years specialist.

Awareness of possible pupil misconceptions (this possible area for comment is identified in the College guidance)

e.g. “Understanding of misconceptions was good. You anticipated the use of different tenses and guided pupils towards the use of the correct tense” (Year 2 undergraduate November 2000 KS2 class)

“ You have clearly identified misconceptions about capitals/lower case and have planned and given experiences to sort these” (PGCE December 2000 KS1 class)_

No mentor comments arose from interview under this theme, but the interview schedule may have prevented this. An unstructured approach might reveal how far mentors consider pupils misconceptions to be part of

English subject knowledge, when not prompted by the generic College guidance sheet.

Using/need to use a range of teaching strategies(this possible area for comment is identified in the College guidance)

The relatively few comments on this theme referred to a lack of appropriate strategies as often as there were references of a more positive nature. Comments also tended to lack the specificity evident elsewhere.

e.g.” Different strategies were used, including writing/underlining answer and oral work” (PGCE December 2000 KS 2 class)

“You now need to use appropriate strategies to ensure the knowledge is used to enhance the opportunities to improve pupil learning” (Year 2 undergraduate November 2000 KS 2 class)

Specific reference to National Literacy Strategy/National Curriculum/Early Learning Goals

This continued to be a recurring theme, as in comments from reports written during 1999-2000. However, there were fewer comments that consisted solely of references to knowledge of the format of the Literacy Hour.

e.g. “Structure of literacy hour was clear (Year 2 undergraduate November 2000 KS 1 class) – almost all comments of this type then proceed to identify further elements of subject knowledge

“Planning and delivery of Literacy Hour showed awareness of how components fit together to deliver learning intentions” (PGCE December 2000 KS 1 class)

While it is impossible to make direct comparisons in terms of percentage of comments on this theme, the impression given of comments written in Autumn 2000 as opposed to those written in 1999 is that mentors are now less likely to see knowledge of the structure of the Literacy Hour as a subject knowledge issue. This will be a question for further investigation in the main project.

Mentors S and K place more emphasis on the content of the Literacy Strategy as constituting “subject knowledge” than the other mentors interviewed to date.

Advice

There are far more examples of content specific advice in the comments made in Autumn 2000 than there were in 1999/2000, where, if advice was given at all, it was much more general.

e.g. “Make sure you say the phonemes correctly and encourage the children to say t- and not ter” (Year 2 undergraduate November 2000 KS 1 class)

“ Good use of subject specific vocabulary. Check definition of suffix. Not all words ending in –al use it as a suffix” (Year 2 undergraduate November 2000 KS 2 class).

Appendix Hi.
Example of matrix analysis.

Year 3 students June 2001.

Class	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Notes
R/1/2											ICT ref only
R			✓				ELG/FS				
R		✓					ELG				2 phonics
R								✓	✓		9 good questioning; individual learning style; pupil participation
R					✓ ✓	✓					6 handwriting phonics
R	✓										
R					✓ ✓		✓		✓		
R	✓						ELG				
R									✓		patient; sensit
R					✓ ✓						rhyme
R							✓				
R			✓								
R			✓				ELG;FS	✓			
R							ELG				
R	✓				✓						
R								✓			8 Chn worked well & took to
R					✓		FS/ELG insecure				5;More practical activities needed weak student
R					✓						5 use of tape recorder
R/1		✓									2 reading strategies
1		✓									2 good understanding; progression in phonic development
1	✓	✓									2 structure of information to referring to le by name & so
1								✓			

1	✓										
1	✓	✓									2 handwriting
1	✓										
1							✓				
1		✓					✓				2 guided writi
1..			✓				✓				
1				✓							
1			✓		✓				✓		
1	✓	✓									2 explained w
1	✓										
1							✓				
1/2									✓		
1/2			✓	✓							
2											Class management
2											Class management
2	✓										
2											ICT ref only
2		✓									2 spelling strategies
2		✓	✓								
2	✓				✓						
2			✓								
2	✓							✓			
2	✓					✓					
2			✓								
2					✓						
2		✓								✓	vocabulary
3											No use of ICT
3		✓	✓	✓					✓		
3		✓							✓ ✓		Two obs of sa student
3	✓		✓								Two obs of sa student
3		✓									
3/4		✓					✓				
3/4	✓										
3/4	✓										
4/					✓		✓	✓			5 be more dynamic ? gro reading
4					✓		✓				5 integrate ? 1
4	✓	✓			✓						Links between short & med 1 planning
4		✓			✓					✓	
4	✓				✓			✓			
4,					✓			✓			
4		✓	✓	✓						✓	

4	✓										
4		✓			✓						
4	✓										
5	✓										
5											ICT only comment
5	✓										
5		✓									
5	✓				✓						
5									✓		
5	✓										
5						✓	✓				
5		✓									
5/6		✓									
5/6		✓									
6	✓				✓						
6		✓									But spelling mistakes on resources
6		✓									
6	✓						✓				
6							✓				
6											ICT ref only

Appendix Hii.

Reflections on the data as a result of using matrix analysis.

Alternative decisions could have been made about allocating theme headings to comments. These are noted in italics. The original matrix entries were later changed and further examination of Themes Two, five and nine resulted from this process..

The re-evaluation.of the process of analysis acted as at least a partial check on “procedural accuracy”.

Example of the analysis process

Full text of original comments before transfer to matrix, showing identification of themes. Year 2 students 2000/1 extract.

1.You are aware of the format of the Literacy Hour⁷. You enlivened what could have been a dull text (the story of York Minster) with your discussion & explanation⁹. The task was appropriate for year 2 children.⁸

2. Good awareness of literacy aims, objectives etc.² Possibly two children could have used Talking First word to produce their instructions

Would now code no 2 differently from matrix – would include theme 5 and create different theme heading for comment presently allocated to theme 2.

3. Good differentiation of two ways of saying ‘oo’² You were clear about the difference and dealt confidently ¹⁰ with the words that were not spelt with ‘oo’.

I now think this implicitly contains reference to theme 6 – not identified on matrix

4. You demonstrated a good use of relevant vocabulary⁷. Don’t forget to use the school script to model writing. (You picked this up in evaluations – good)⁵

5. Good use of subject specific vocabulary⁷. Check definition of a suffix. Not all words ending in –al use it as a suffix.⁵

Have been inconsistent about allocation of references to ‘vocabulary’ – sometimes I have allocated to theme 7 as here, but elsewhere to theme 2. Now feel these are examples of Theme 2 & will need to re-allocate.

6. Understanding of misconceptions was good.⁶ You anticipated the use of different tenses and guided pupils towards the use of the correct tense.

Would now identify word ‘guided’ as being significant & allocate to theme 9

7. J has a good understanding of the subject by the ways she responds to the children and encourages them through questioning⁹. J is becoming more confident¹⁰ with the structure of the Literacy Hour⁷ and is increasingly aware of the different strategies required.⁹

Is the word ‘responds’ also significant?

8. You had a clear understanding of the work you were teaching the class². ICT programme arranged for more able group.

9. K you have shown you have a good understanding of literacy¹ and thought about different ways to put the concept across⁴. Use of key words may aid children’s understanding as well as your explanations.⁵ During initial part of literacy lesson experiment with different approaches.-paired work etc which may help children be more focused.⁵

10. Teacher showed good understanding of the subject¹ and was therefore able to question the children appropriately about the story and the poem.⁹

Nos 9 & 10 are examples of identifying theme 1 without acknowledging the full context in which it occurs.

11. The main focus of the lesson was speech marks and synonyms². Mrs C was confident¹⁰ and secure showing good subject knowledge. She used a

variety of teaching strategies.⁹ The children responded well to these. When misunderstanding occurred the teacher noticed quickly and helped the children to see the mistake.⁶

“Confidence” as an indicator of subject knowledge – but what if her confidence is mis-placed?

Appendix I.
Extracts from student evaluations of school experience.

Students were asked to identify the frequency of discussions focusing on headings from the lesson observation pro-forma.

Year 2 2000/2001.				
Number of returns 160.				
	Regularly	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Planning	41%	38%	11%	10%
Teaching/class management	39%	44%	13%	4%
Quality of pupils learning	24%	54%	19%	4%
Subject Knowledge	14%	43%	27%	16%
MARRA	20%	50%	22%	8%
24 students (15%) did not receive written feedback until more than 24 hours after the observation. 4 students never received written feedback (2.5%)				

In 2001/2 students were asked to distinguish between discussions held with mentor and those held with class teacher. Figures below are those for discussions with mentors. Total of 100% not reached as some students did not complete all sections.

In both years discussions about subject knowledge took place less regularly than discussions about other aspects. In both years higher percentages of students said they rarely or never discussed subject knowledge with their mentors.

Year 2 2001/2002.				
Number of returns 141 some partly incomplete -totals do not reach 100%				
	Regularly	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Planning	22%	30%	19%	8%
Teaching/class management	29%	39%	15%	4%
Quality of pupils learning	19%	32%	21%	7%
Subject Knowledge	13%	31%	24%	18%
MARRA	21%	39%	21%	6%
33 students (23%) did not receive written feedback until more than 24 hours after the observation. 5 students never received written feedback (3.2%)				

Appendix J

Incidence of Theme One (*sound subject knowledge shown*)
without further supporting comments.

Academic year & student year group	Total number of forms returned	Number of references to Theme 1 only	% of total forms returned.
2000/2001			
Year 1	47	5	10
Year 2	68	4	5.8
Year 3	84	9	10
2001/2002			
Year 1	157	9	5.7
Year 2	82	6	7.3
Year 3	150	16	4
2002/2003			
Year 2	94	10	10
Year 3	77	9	11

Forms returned for Year 1 students in 2002/2003 not included due to programme changes.

In a number of cases mentors have worked with more than one student over the academic year. Where they have written the same generic comment on all observation forms this may have affected the result.

Appendix Ki.

Questionnaire form given to mentors at English Conference

Text:

Completing the lesson observation form for students teaching English

We have not included a section on our assessment guidance grid under the heading “Subject Knowledge & Understanding” at today’s conference, but we will still be asking mentors to make comments on this aspect of students’ teaching on our lesson observation sheets & to contribute to a judgement of students’ subject knowledge in English by the Half Term.

It would be helpful to us in providing any additional guidance for mentors if you could complete this quick questionnaire during this afternoon. The purpose of the questionnaire is to discover what aspects of subject knowledge in English you think are important.

Name & School (optional but useful!)

.....

Background information

1. Is your experience /training mainly in KS 1 or KS2 ? KS1 KS2
2. In which age ranges do you mentor students? KS1 KS2 Both
- 3 Have you worked with students on a final placement before? No once
more than once

Completing the Subject Knowledge & Understanding section on the lesson observation form.

When you complete the form do you comment on any of the following possible aspects under this heading?

	often	sometimes	seldom	never
1.Understanding of Literacy Hour structure (not content or objectives) e.g. shared reading or writing				
2. Knowledge of underpinning content e.g. grammar phonics, features of genre				
3. Knowledge of a range of texts/choice of text				
4. Understanding of how children develop literacy e.g. reading/writing/speaking & listening development				
5. Student's choice of teaching strategies and resources to deliver learning objectives e.g. drama, investigations				
6. Student's use of appropriate ICT to support teaching & learning				
7. Student's ability to support pupil learning through questions				
8. Student's ability to support pupil learning through explanations				
9. Student's ability to support pupil learning through marking /responding to work				
10 Student's ability to engage the full ability range within the class				

Are you more likely to comment on any of the above aspects if you feel they are weak rather than strong?

No

Yes

If yes, please write the number(s) of the relevant aspects

.....

Please indicate the numbers of the three aspects from the above list which are the most important to you

.....

.....

Are there aspects of subject knowledge & understanding which are missing from the list above, but which you think are important to identify in students? If so, please comment below

Thank you very much for taking the time to respond.

Viv Wilson.

Appendix Kii.
Analysis of responses to Conference questionnaire

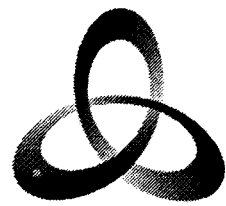
No correlation was found between experience of mentors or key stage background and responses.

Completing the Subject Knowledge & Understanding section on the lesson observation form.

When you complete the form do you comment on any of the following possible aspects under this heading?

	often	some times	seldom	no
1.Understanding of Literacy Hour structure (not content or objectives) e.g. shared reading or writing	8	32	26	2
2. Knowledge of underpinning content e.g. grammar, phonics, features of genre	24	40	4	0
3. Knowledge of a range of texts/choice of text	15	41	9	3
4. Understanding of how children develop literacy skills e.g. reading/writing/speaking & listening development	27	31	9	1
5. Student’s choice of teaching strategies and/or resources to deliver learning objectives e.g. drama, investigations	45	22	1	0
6. Student’s use of appropriate ICT to support teaching & learning	31	30	6	1
7. Student’s ability to support pupil learning through questions	54	13	1	0
8. Student’s ability to support pupil learning through explanations	42	23	3	0
9. Student’s ability to support pupil learning through marking /responding to work	33	31	2	2
10 Student’s ability to engage the full ability range within the class.	56	10	2	0

Appendix Li.
Post-Conference evaluation form



Dear Colleague,

Last April you registered to attend a Mentor Conference focusing on the assessment and support of Year 3 students teaching of English. Rather than ask you to evaluate the conference on the day, we decided to wait to see what effect it has had on your mentoring practice overall.

We are interested to know how the work on the day affected your mentoring with Year 3 students and also whether you feel you can apply aspects of the discussion to mentoring for English teaching with this term’s PGCE and Year 2 students, if you are involved.

If you were able to attend on the day, I would be very grateful if you would complete this questionnaire and return it to me at College, either using one of our pre-paid envelopes or by bringing it to this term’s Area Partnership Meeting on Wednesday November 27th if you are mentoring students this term.

Part of this questionnaire also relates to research work in which I am engaged as part of my own doctoral study. These sections are clearly indicated.

Viv Wilson.

The Conference had several intended outcomes for mentors.

This section of form omitted in Appendix .

The next section of the questionnaire relates to my own research project. It is not an evaluation of the Conference. If you would prefer not to participate in my research please leave this section blank. We would still be very interested in your views on the Conference.

As part of my own research investigation I would be very interested to find out what you feel is meant by the term “English” and by the term “subject knowledge”.

Please use the rating scale to indicate your agreement with the following statements. Please read all the statements first before responding.

5 indicates a strong feeling that the statement is important and 1 indicates a feeling that the statement is not important

I think the main purpose of teaching English is:

To enable pupils to communicate effectively with others in society	5	4	3
To give pupils access to the ideas of others through literature and non-fiction texts	5	4	3
To provide pupils with means of developing their imagination and creativity	5	4	3
To give pupils the skills of critical awareness so they can make informed judgements about the written and spoken language they encounter in society	5	4	3
To give pupils literacy skills which will help them succeed in their future lives	5	4	3
To help develop their personal values and understanding through reading, writing & discussion	5	4	3
To provide children with the means to access high quality literature	5	4	3

Other? Please write your own opinion here if you wish:

When I think about subject knowledge in English I give a high priority to:
5 = high and 1 = low

Knowledge of a range of suitable texts to support English teaching (e.g. fiction, non-fiction, texts derived from ICT contexts such as e-mail, picture fiction etc.)	5	4	3
Familiarity with a range of teaching strategies to support English teaching (e.g. drama, speaking & listening strategies, guided reading, guided writing)	5	4	3
An understanding of children’s literacy development	5	4	3
Knowledge of the rules of grammar & spelling	5	4	3
Competence in the pedagogic skill of questioning	5	4	3
Knowledge of phonics	5	4	3
Understanding of “technical terms” (e.g. genre, digraph, morpheme, stanza, calligram)	5	4	3
Knowledge of the content of the NLS and/or Guidance for the Foundation Stage	5	4	3
Competence in the pedagogic skill of explaining	5	4	3
Knowing how to motivate and engage all pupils in English learning	5	4	3

Some information about yourself.

In which Key Stage do you currently teach?	Foundation	KS	KS2
In which Key Stage(s) do you mentor students?	Foundation	KS1	KS2
How long have you been teaching?	<input type="text"/>	ye.	
How long have you been a mentor?	<input type="text"/>	ye	
In terms of the number of students you have mentored, how experienced would you describe yourself?	Very Quite Not very		
Would you be willing to be approached to participate further in my research? If so, please give your contact details:			

Thank you very much indeed for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. Please feel free to contact me with any questions you may have about the use of this data.
Viv Wilson.

Appendix Lii.
Analysis of responses to post-Conference evaluation.

I think the main purpose of teaching English is

Statement	5	4	3	2	1
1.To enable pupils to communicate effectively with others in society	11	6	2		
2.To give pupils access to the ideas of others through literature and non fiction texts	7	10	2		
3.To provide pupils with means of developing their imagination and creativity	8	8	3		
4.To give pupils the skills of critical awareness so they can make informed judgements about the written and spoken language they encounter in society	4	10	5		
5.To give pupils literacy skills which will help them to succeed in their future lives	15	4			
6.To help develop their personal values and understanding through reading, writing and discussion	6	6	6		
7. To provide children with the means to access high quality literature	4	6	8	1	

When I think about subject knowledge in English I give a high priority to:

Statement	5	4	3	2	1
1.Knowledge of a range of suitable texts to support English teaching	6	12	1		
2.Familiarity with a range of teaching strategies to support English teaching	13	4	2		
3.An understanding of children’s literacy development	8	9	3		
4.Knowledge of the rules of grammar and spelling	5	11	3		
5.Competence in the pedagogic skill of questioning	2	13	4		
6. Knowledge of phonics	6	7	6		
7. Understanding of technical terms	2	4	10	3	
8.Knowledge of the content of the NLS and/or Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage	6	7	5	1	
9. Competence in the pedagogic skill of explaining	4	9	6		
10. Knowing how to motivate and engage all pupils in English learning	13	5	1		

Appendix M.

Theme 2: Comparison of references to aspects of content knowledge.

All tables: Actual number of references shown.

Numbers of students placed in Reception and KS1 classes are proportionately higher than those in KS2 for all year groups and all academic years.

2000/01

	Reception	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
Phonics	✓X	✓*					
Spelling			** X				
Developing vocabulary			X X				
Punctuation							
Grammar		✓	*	✓			
Genre features		X	✓			*	✓*
Familiarity with text	✓*	✓*	✓**				
Use of technical terms			✓✓	✓**	✓✓*	✓	✓**
Researching knowledge							

Year 1 students = ✓ Year 2 students = * Year 3 students = X

Specific references to content & NC year group

Technical terms:

- onomatopoeia – yr 6, use of first person (twice) – yr 1 /2, yr 6
- autobiography & biography –yr 5, synonyms-yr 3, personification-yr 6

Grammar:

- sentence construction- yr 1, adjectives (twice) – yr 2

Features of genre :

- rap poems –yr 5, important characters and sub-plots-yr 6,

Spelling/vocabulary:

- words spelt with different meanings-yr 1 /2,

(No detailed information is given for Key Stage 2 classes for Year 3 students as this was not included on the analysis method used at the time.)

2001/02

	Reception	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
Phonics	✓* X X	✓✓X	✓*	✓			
Spelling			✓			✓	
Developing vocabulary	✓X	X			X	✓	
Punctuation			✓*	✓	✓		
Grammar			✓	✓✓*	X*	X X	
Genre features			✓✓	✓✓✓ ✓✓*	✓✓✓ *** X X	✓✓✓ * X X	
Familiarity with text		X	✓✓✓ X X	✓✓		✓✓X	✓✓X X X X X
Use of technical terms		✓✓✓ X	✓✓✓ ✓✓✓ ✓X	✓✓✓ * X X	✓	✓✓X X	* X X
Researching knowledge	X				X		

Year 1 students = ✓ Year 2 students = * Year 3 students = X

Specific references to content & NC year group, showing clear links to NLS Framework.

Punctuation: punctuation – Yr 1; Yr 2;Yr 3; speech marks – Yr 2;

Grammar: adjectives – Yr 2;nouns & adjectives – Yr 3; clauses – Yr 5, prepositions –Yr 5;

Features of genre: dictionary use – Yr 1 /2 ;shape poems (twice) – Yr 3, letter writing – Yr 3; acrostics – Yr 4, haiku – Yr 4 writing instructions – Yr 4, poetry structure – Yr 4, diary writing – Yr 5; fables – Yr 5;quest story – Yr 6;

Technical vocabulary: compound words – Yr 2; similes – Yr 2; synonyms- Yr 3, alliteration – Yr 5; similes & metaphors – Yr 5, idiom –Yr 5/6; personification – Yr 6

Between 2000/1 and 2001/2 a shift in the pattern of emphasis is very clear. There are relatively few references to content knowledge for students working with Reception and Year 1 classes, although about 40% of the observation forms are for students with these age groups. Content knowledge becomes more significant for mentors in for pupils in Year 2 and

upwards. First year student teachers appear to receive more comments on content knowledge than other year groups – a proportionately greater number of forms were returned for first years and third years than for second years in 2001/2. Nevertheless, allowing for this difference, content knowledge still has a higher profile with first year undergraduates. There are also more references to first year students as having weaknesses in content knowledge which need to be ‘researched’.

2002/03

	Reception	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
Phonics	*** X X X X X	*** X X X X	X		*		
Spelling							
Developing vocabulary	X	* X	X			X	
Punctuation							
Grammar	X		*			X X	
Genre features			*	* X	* X	* X	X X X
Familiarity with text		X	****	X	X	*	
Use of technical terms			*	*		** X	X
Researching knowledge	X	* X				**	*

Year 1 students = ✓ Year 2 students = * Year 3 students = X

In 2002/3 no directly comparable data for first year students was available due to programme changes.

The patterns of emphasis for different pupil year groups remains as before.

Specific references to content & NC year group, showing clear links to NLS Framework.

Grammar: adjectives & verbs – Yr 2; imperative verbs – Yr 6; prioper & common nouns – Yr 2;

Features of genre: different text types – Yr 6; formats of comic strip & play script – Yr 3; newspaper report – Yr 4; shape poetry – Yr 2

Technical vocabulary: onomatopoeia – Yr 5; synonyms –Yr 4/5; compound words – Yr 3;

Appendix N.
Discourse analysis.

Certain sequential structures are commonly noted in institutional talk, such as the Initiation-Response-Feedback/Evaluation chain commonly used in classrooms (Sinclair and Coulthard, 1975). “Cued elicitation” (Billig et al, 1988) is also noted as a feature of talk interaction in ‘learner-centred’ classrooms (Mercer, 1995).

Perspective-display series (PDS) are commonly noted in medical diagnostic conversations (Maynard, 1991) as a “device by which one party can produce a report or opinion after first soliciting a recipient’s perspective” (Maynard, 1991:464).

The PDS sequence often initiated mentoring conversations, for example: “How do you think that went?” which provided mentors with an opportunity to orient themselves to the student’s perspective in terms of their initial feedback. In example 3, the student appears to use this sequence to pre-empt mentor criticism, but eventually her list of “things that went wrong” provides the mentor with an opportunity to conform her ‘diagnosis’ and to re-take control of the structure of the conversation.

Examples : commentary on extract from conversations, drawing on discourse analysis.

1. Extract from early in conversation between Mentor K and final year student P

<p>K: Moving on to teaching and classroom management, your class control is very good at the beginning of the lesson, and you took up a good teaching position; the children could see you and hear you.</p> <p>The first point really to discuss about that was that you missed an opportunity to link the text work and the sentence work, which made the transition between those two parts of the lesson</p>	<p><i>“Moving on” indicates both K in control of sequence and the continued use of the structure of the HEI observation form.</i></p> <p><i>K’s perception of an effective literacy lesson appears to be structural here. A “natural” transition is presented as desirable without explanation. An</i></p>
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less natural. Can you just talk to me about that for a moment?	<i>explicit ‘charge’ is made.</i>
<i>P. I think I sort of took the literacy hour too literally and actually had the fifteen/fifteen/twenty minute structure and ten minute plenary, and perhaps need to be more flexible and have the text and sentence level at the beginning, to increase the flow of the lesson, as it was not linked to the text level work.</i>	<i>Charge is accepted. P’s response is similarly concerned primarily with structure. Lesson “flow” concept is introduced (as part of a ‘natural’ metaphor sequence?)Flexibility related here to structural features not to pedagogic adaptability.</i>
<u>K. So your sentence level work didn’t link to the text, can you now see any way that you could have linked it together and perhaps have made a little more flow to the lesson, bearing in mind that you did go back afterwards to using the text work in the guided group and independent work?</u>	<i>Use of “so” signifies indicates that charge is now accepted as valid by both parties & charge is re-stated. P is invited to provide solution, but is supported by hint in last part of sentence. Note K picks up on word “flow” in the same way P picked up on word “link”.</i>

The above sequence gives some indication of the ways in which this mentor and student use language co-operatively to construct their agreement. This extract is followed by the rest of the IRF sequence in which P appropriately provides a structural solution to the problem of lesson ‘flow’. The relevance of “flow” to the pupils is not considered.

2.
Following a mentor led discussion of cross curricular links from the observed literacy lesson, in which the student has been supported into recognising the potential learning opportunities (mentor L, student teacher K, responses italicised):

L. Because this is what’s important in your training. You see the skills you put in literacy need to be picked up and put into other subjects as well because that’s where they practice (yes) and that’s where they pick up the habit (yes) and that’s	Information delivery mode operated by mentor. Student K signals attention through repeated affirmation (response tokens). Possibly an example of
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<p>what we want (yes) they're independent, they don't have to think about it. (yes) What else do you think you were developing this morning which is probably very important?</p> <p>(Silence of several seconds)</p> <p>It was hidden (pause) it was the reading.</p> <p>(Yes</p> <p>(Yes reading the instructions (overlapping)</p> <p><i>K. Yes, making, um,, that's what I was really- working with my group I was trying to get them to read the instructions and 'cos they were saying "what can I draw for this one" and they were saying "I don't know" and I was saying "well read it and try to make sense of the instructions"...</i></p> <p>L. Using the text as a cue to the construction of the work, and of course what that's doing - is the new thinking that's delivering the Literacy Hour that these two week blocks, the first week is very much reading based which is what you did last week (yes) and this week is the writing which of course encompasses those layout skills you've actually been doing. (yes) That means you're putting into place the latest research , well done.</p>	<p>"being willing"?</p> <p>Initiation sequence....</p> <p>Cued elicitation.....turn transfer does not occur - IRF sequence cannot be completed. E repairs sequence failure.</p> <p>K now responds & E affirms</p> <p>K's descriptive account could be seen either as an example of talking her understanding into being, or as a form of "charge-rebuttal" (Potter, 1997) in which she is attempting to repair any negative impression created by her inability to respond to E's previous question.</p> <p>E's response is affirmative of K's actions, but also enables the initiation of a further information transmission sequence which is focused on curriculum delivery. K's role is again that of recipient.</p>
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Example 3.

Mentor B with student J - responses italicised. PGCE student with Year 3 class Autumn 2002.

B: How did you find the lesson went, J?

(indecipherable)

B; It went badly – I'm surprised. Why was that?

J: Compared to yesterday anyway, because I thought it was too hard for them. The timing was a little bit off. I think that I shouldn't have done the (indecipherable) poem...

B: Right

J: I think I should have done the Magic Box poem and then I could have drawn their attention to the repetition more easily....

B; Yes

J; and also the vocabulary – I noticed towards the end...

B Yes I noticed that too. I was going round and saw the sheet and I thought, have they met these words before....

In this PDS sequence J pre-empts a negative judgement by making it herself. B's surprised response appears to be genuine. Possibly J interprets this response as an indication that B was more satisfied with the lesson than she expected. By using the word 'anyway' J now sets an implied standard of better performance with reference to the previous lesson (not observed by B). This enables her to stake a claim to some professional expertise as she analyses the shortcomings of the observed lesson.

Example 4. Mentor K with student P. Year 3 (final year) undergraduate. Year 5 class. Summer 2002

K: So I think that is coming along well; good organisation and control. We might look next, in the next viewing, to see you have some influence on the classroom environment on the display in the classroom, but that's something that we could talk about and develop....

P: I'm preparing some work the children have done on advertisements, ready to be put up on a display as part of their persuasive writing work.

K. Okay, good, well I look forward to seeing that

Interruptions appear to occur only at points where P believes a “charge” is being made, suggesting that he is very aware of the underlying assessment agenda in the conversation, and is seeking to place himself in a good light...P is ‘orienting’ himself to his own strategic purpose in this way.

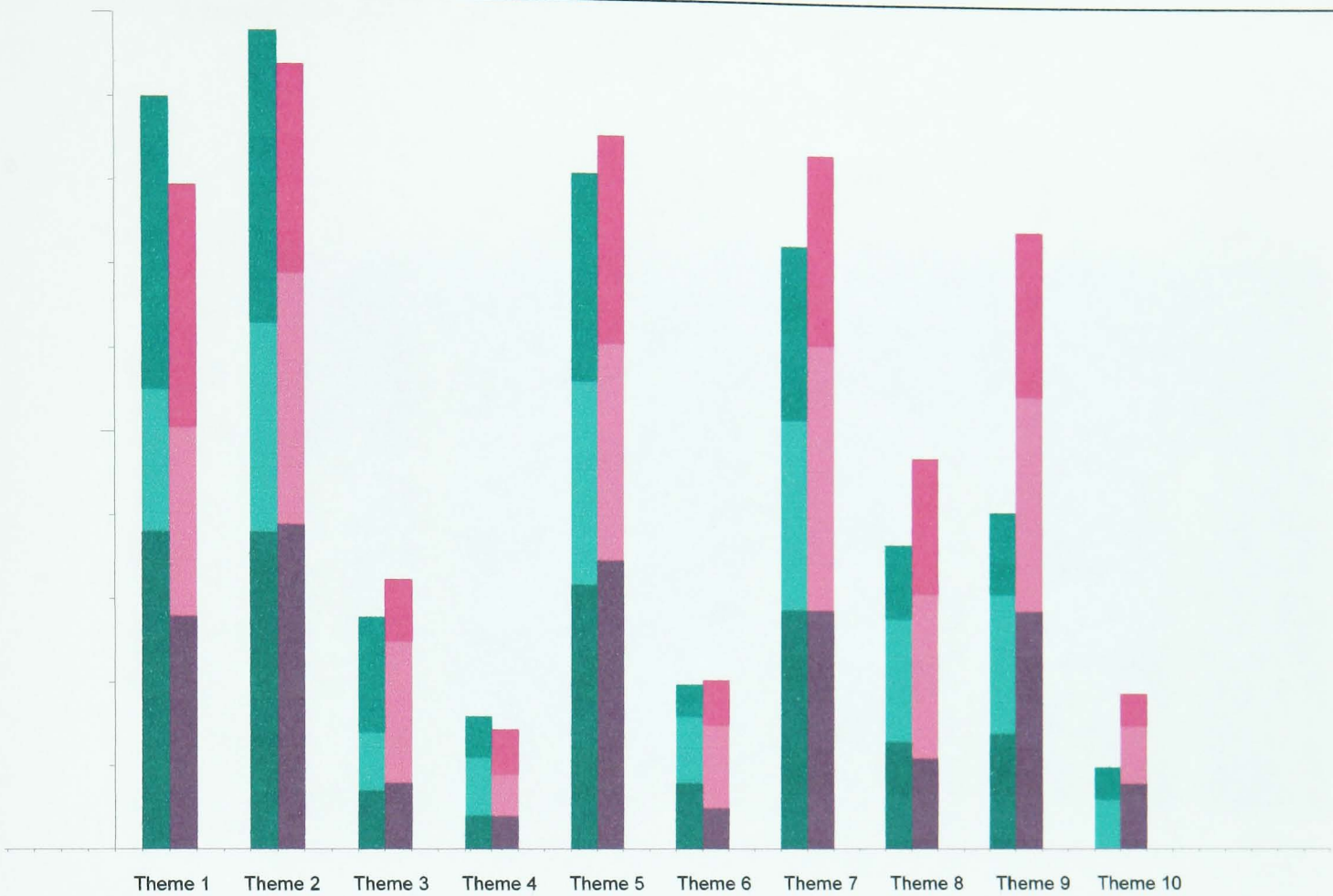
Appendices Oi -Oiv

Graphs to show comparison of Themes over the Three Year Period

Appendix Oi on the following page shows a comparison of academic years 2000/1 (green columns) and 2001/2 (red columns) for the numbers of incidences of all themes, combined for all three undergraduate year groups for which comparable data are available. Columns are internally divided to indicate the relative proportions of comments as a percentage of the total returns made for each separate year group of students. Year One students are at the base of each column, Year Three at the top. A change in programme structure in 2002/3 in response to the revised Standards has meant that a three-year comparison is not possible for all undergraduate year groups.

Appendices Oii, Oiii and Oiv show comparisons between the Themes over a three-year period for each year group of student teachers on the undergraduate programme.

Appendix Oi.
Comparison for all themes over period 2000-2002.



1.

generic reference to “subject knowledge & understanding”
2.

“knowing what you are teaching”
- 3

reference to subject knowledge as evident in plans/ lesson objectives/ knowing what you wanted the children to learn
- 4

being able to “get it across”
- 5

advice about lesson content or management
- 6

reference to pupil difficulties or misconceptions
- 7

specific reference to the NLS/reference to use of appropriate vocabulary
- 8

reference to pupils’ needs as learners
9.

reference to use of teaching strategies
10.

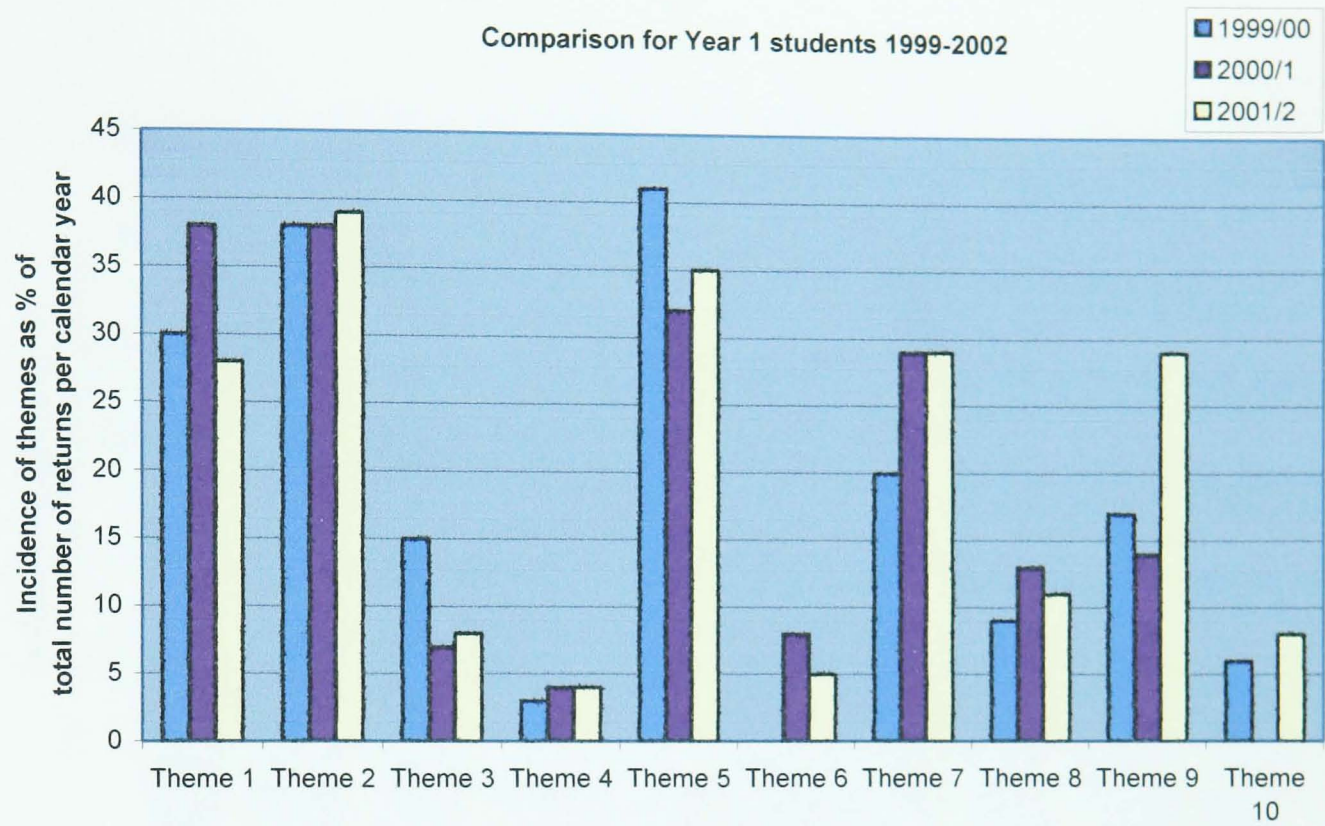
reference to “confidence”

See Chapter Seven for a discussion of data collected in 1999/00. Subsequent graphs comparing three year spans for second and third year undergraduates are for the years 2000-2003.

Comparisons are made on a percentage basis of the total number of observation forms returned each year, but it is important to note that while the numbers obtained for 1999/2000 and 2000/2001 are similar as a proportion of the total number of students in the year groups (about 20% in each case) the returns for 2001/2 show an increase to over 50% for some year groups, and those for 2002/3 around 40%.

Appendix Oii.

Comparison for Year 1 undergraduate students 1999-2002.



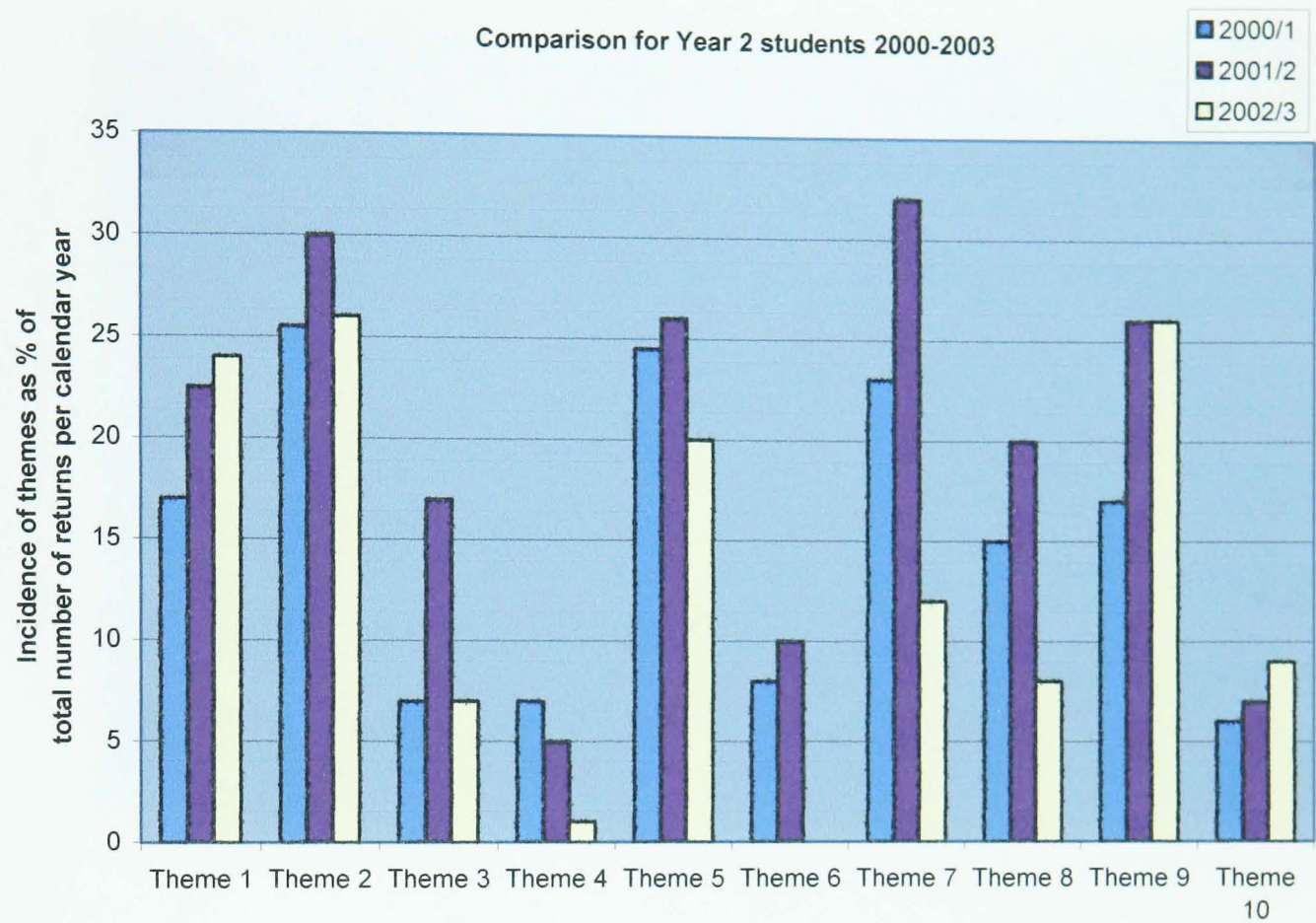
Themes

1. generic reference to “subject knowledge & understanding”
2. “knowing what you are teaching”
- 3 reference to subject knowledge as evident in plans/ lesson objectives/ knowing what you wanted the children to learn
- 4 being able to “get it across”
- 5 advice about lesson content or management
- 6 reference to pupil difficulties or misconceptions
- 7 specific reference to the NLS/reference to use of appropriate vocabulary
- 8 reference to pupils’ needs as learners
9. reference to use of teaching strategies
10. reference to “confidence”

Data for Year 1 students in 2002/3 has been collected and analysed, but is not included here as changes to the programme mean that the results cannot be directly comparable to 1999-2002 data.

Comparisons are made on a percentage basis of the total number of observation forms returned each year, but it is important to note that while the numbers obtained for 1999/2000 and 2000/2001 are similar as a proportion of the total number of students in the year groups (about 20% in each case) the returns for 2001/2 show an increase to over 50% for some year groups, and those for 2002/3 around 40%.

Appendix Oiii.
Comparison for Year 2 undergraduate students 2000-2003



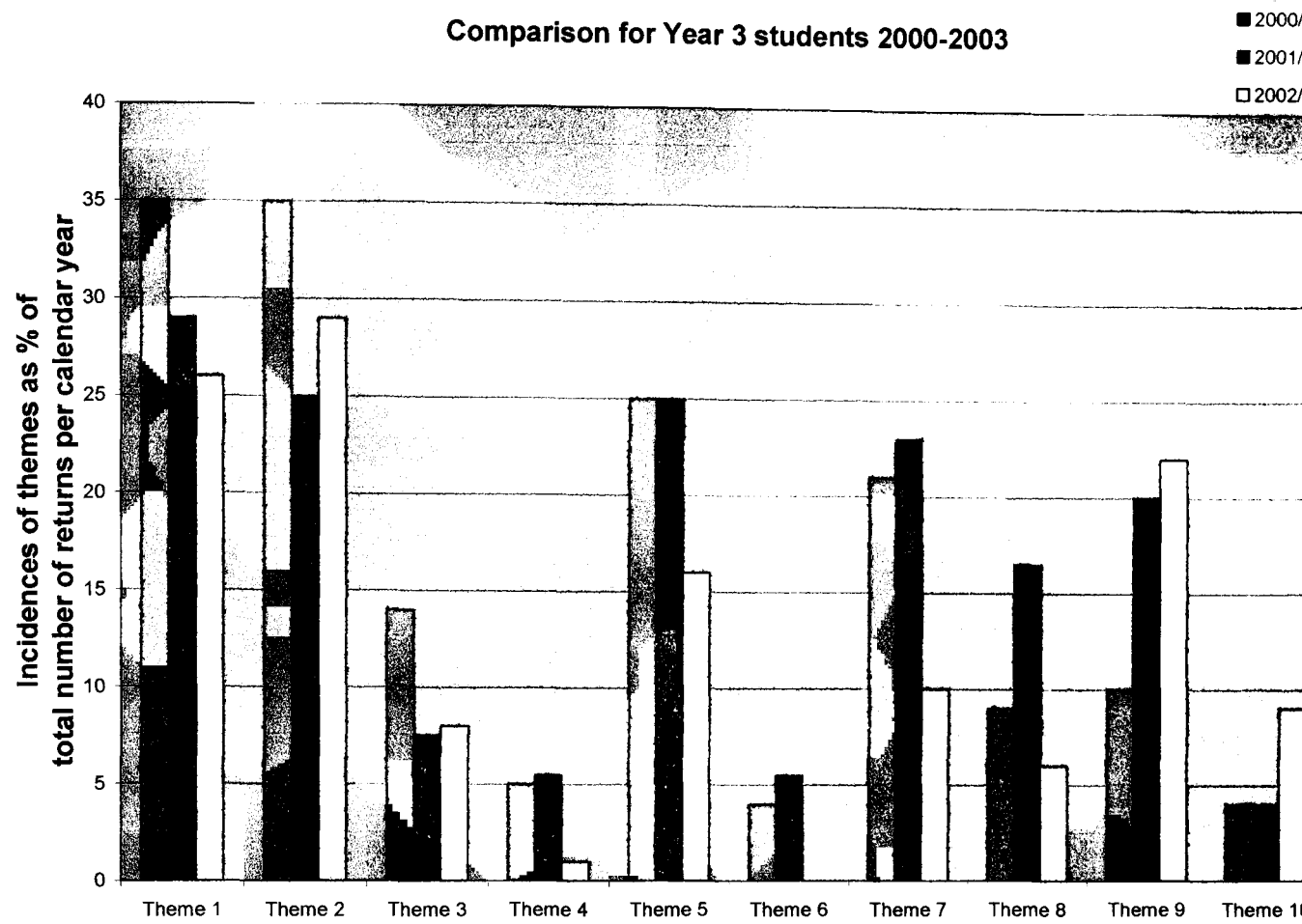
Themes

- 1. generic reference to “subject knowledge & understanding”
- 2. “knowing what you are teaching”
- 3. reference to subject knowledge as evident in plans/ lesson objectives/ knowing what you wanted the children to learn
- 4. being able to “get it across”
- 5. advice about lesson content or management
- 6. reference to pupil difficulties or misconceptions
- 7. specific reference to the NLS/reference to use of appropriate vocabulary
- 8. reference to pupils’ needs as learners
- 9. reference to use of teaching strategies
- 10. reference to “confidence”

Comparisons are made on a percentage basis of the total number of observation forms returned each year, but it is important to note that while the numbers obtained for 1999/2000 and 2000/2001 are similar as a proportion of the total number of students in the year groups (about 20% in each case) the returns for 2001/2 show an increase to over 50% for some year groups, and those for 2002/3 around 40%.

Appendix Oiv.

Comparison for Year 3 undergraduate students 2000-2003



Themes

1. generic reference to “subject knowledge & understanding”
2. “knowing what you are teaching”
3. reference to subject knowledge as evident in plans/
lesson objectives/knowing what you wanted the children to learn
4. being able to “get it across”
5. advice about lesson content or management
6. reference to pupil difficulties or misconceptions
7. specific reference to the NLS/reference to use of appropriate vocabulary
8. reference to pupils’ needs as learners
9. reference to use of teaching strategies
10. reference to “confidence”

Comparisons are made on a percentage basis of the total number of observation forms returned each year, but it is important to note that while the numbers obtained for 1999/2000 and 2000/2001 are similar as a proportion of the total number of students in the year groups (about 20% in each case) the returns for 2001/2 show an increase to over 50% for some year groups, and those for 2002/3 around 40%.